











# OUTLINES OF NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PATH

BY

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# CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Five Great Ideas of the Present-day World ... ..	1
II. The Socialist Content of the National Congress and Indian Nationalism	13
III. The Growth of Socialist Content of the Indian National Congress (in practice) ... ..	26
Appendix to Chapter III	
Fundamental Rights ... ..	35
IV. Nationalism-cum-Socialism ...	37
V. Indian Nationalism is no Negative Force ... ..	41
VI. Nationalism and Religion ...	47
VII. Nationalism can be a Socially Evolutionary Force ... ..	50
VIII. Social Revolution and the Indian Nationalist Movement ...	52
IX. Nationalism is a Positive Force ...	56
X. Lessons of China ... ..	59
XI. The Rights and Wrongs of Peasants' Challenge to World Capitalism ...	67
XII. The Greatest Iniquity and Sore in Modern Society ... ..	71
XIII. Evolution of Unequal Distribution of World's Wealth between Peasants and others ... ..	73
XIV. Landlordism is losing ground; Peasant Economy is gaining strength	76



Chapter		Page
XV.	Influences making for Peasant Consciousness ... ..	78
XVI.	Peasants the Greatest Revolutionary Vanguard ... ..	81
XVII.	How Peasants have broken the Iron Ring of International Trade and World Trade ... ..	84
XVIII.	Emergence of the Modern Revolutionary Peasant ... ..	86
XIX.	What are the Factors that decide the Character of Distribution of Wealth in Society? ... ..	91
XX.	Alignment of Modern Classes ...	93
XXI.	Evil Results of a Wrong Idea ...	105
XXII.	When can Peasants be Revolutionary? ... ..	108
XXIII.	Revolutionary Role of Middle Classes	111
XXIV.	Who are the Proletariat? ...	115
XXV.	The Menace of Vivisecting India ...	117
XXVI.	Conclusion ... ..	127

# CHAPTER I

## FIVE GREAT IDEAS OF THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD

There are today five great ideas that are exercising the minds of people all over the world. The various political parties and ideological associations are ranged on one side or the other of these ideas. Every country and every political party and class organization has to make its choice between these concepts.

What are these ideas? They are: (1) Nationalism, (2) Socialism, (3) Democracy, (4) Revolutionary Vanguard, and (5) *Ahimsa* or Non-Violence.

Though right up to the outbreak of World War II, western thinkers as well as Russian communists had made much play with the notion that nationalism had had its day and that the peoples of the world had outgrown their nationalistic stage of development, this war and the social forces that it has evoked have once again demonstrated the immeasurable strength and unfathomable depth of the nationalist sentiment latent in all peoples, irrespective of the degree of their social or industrial equipment and development. If today Soviet Russia has weathered the all but overwhelming avalanche of German invasion, and if England has survived repeated waves of ruthless aerial bombardment, it is because of the wonderful patriotism displayed by their masses and the readiness with which the statesmen of Soviet Russia and capitalist England were prepared to foster, stimulate and sustain the nationalist fervour of their people. Is it then necessary to argue about the need of the colonies and the greater need of the colonial peoples to depend upon their latent nationalism in their struggle for freedom and

emancipation from the yoke of imperialism? No Indian, none of the oppressed coloured peoples, need be apologetic about his loyalty to and enthusiasm for nationalism, the most dynamic and revolutionary idea and social force which bids fair to lead them towards their liberation.

Then comes the idea of Socialism. Can the people of the world, especially the exploited coloured peoples, be really free without invoking the idea of Socialism and without adopting the socialist approach to their day-to-day economic and social problems? It used to be thought by the majority of the nationalists of subject countries that they need have little to do with Socialism while they were still in the process of winning freedom. But the experience of both India and China since the beginning of this century has shown how they must necessarily view things from the socialist's angle in order to fight and minimize, if not entirely to eliminate, their economic exploitation by modern imperialism, even while striving for national unity and emancipation. World capitalism is dynamic enough to develop allies among the colonials themselves. Therefore colonial peoples, that is, the oppressed and exploited coloured peoples, are obliged to turn the searchlight of Socialism not only upon foreign capitalists, especially from among their imperial masters, but also upon the local capitalists of their own nationality. Hence the need for all exploited coloured peoples to combine a socialistic approach and outlook with their primary ideological motive power—nationalism. No wonder both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Sun Yat-Sen sagaciously advised workers in the nationalist movement in their respective countries to concern themselves with the economic needs and ideals of the masses and to develop a socialistic outlook on life. Mahatma Gandhi has declared himself a socialist. He has gone even further. He has begun experiments with the communist way of

life, by giving up all private property and living according to the fundamental communist conception: 'From each according to his ability, and to each according to his need'. Dr Sun laid stress on the people's livelihood.

Democracy is another conception to which the oppressed coloured peoples are particularly attached. They have had to struggle against the disguised or open autocracy of their imperial masters. So in the ideal of democracy lies their hope of emancipation from imperialism as well as its local colonial allies like feudalism and capitalism. But what sort of democracy do they want? Not that sort which obtains today in England and the United States, where under the cloak of democracy, capitalism enjoys a virtual dictatorship and vested interests are able to exploit the great mass of the people. Not even that sort of democracy professed by England, which flourishes at the cost of the oppressed coloured masses and agricultural peoples of the world. They want full-fledged, unalloyed democracy, untainted by external or internal imperialism and exploitation. Their conception of democracy is all-embracing, and can function fully only when the great majority of the masses of any country—who constitute the real toilers in the fields and factories—attain to and exercise the fullest power over the State and in society. Such was the democracy that Karl Marx desired, and Mahatma Gandhi and President Cardénaz of Mexico desire to see achieved and enjoyed by all peoples, especially the coloured masses of the world.

In such a democracy, there can be no place for any systems or engines of exploitation. Men shall not exploit women and children. Neither shall the depressed classes or other minorities such as the Harijans of India, the domestic slaves or workers of China and the Negroes and Red Indians of America be allowed to live at the mercy of abler and better organized peoples. Neither

the peasantry nor the proletariat shall be liable to be exploited by landlords or *entrepreneurs*. All sources of power and means of production, especially of key and basic industries, and commercial agencies such as banking and insurance, shall belong to society, under State ownership and control. All land shall belong to the actual tillers of the soil—voluntarily organized into co-operative production and distribution societies. There can be no place in such democratic society for huge private industrial or commercial enterprises, for unlimited profiteering, for the unhealthy social tumours of urban life, or for enormous aggregates of the unfree proletariat. Industry and commerce have to be organized and conducted mostly by a self-governed working class and professionals, on lines determined by society or the State in the interests of the whole community. A self-sufficient industrial and agricultural economy shall be built on a pattern of concentric circles. Thus neither shall national trade destroy local initiative and village and urban self-reliance and self-sufficiency, nor shall international trade hold countries at its mercy for the satisfaction of essential daily needs. Such a democracy must be capable of pressing the productive and organizational potential of capitalism into the service of the masses. It cannot, and ought not, to countenance the enjoyment of a monopoly of political, economic and social power and privileges by any one class, as in the so-called democracies of today; on the contrary, it shall strive to secure real and effective power to the actual toiling masses, including the professional and intellectual cadres.

It follows, therefore, that the Gandhian conception of democracy has no place for the appropriation of the supreme power of making and executing decisions by any one class or group of people. It cannot accept the virtual dictatorship of the capitalists, of the kind that

obtains in western democratic countries, nor the dictatorship of the proletariat of the type that exists in Soviet Russia. It is definitely opposed to any conception of dictatorship open or disguised, and it fights with all its strength every attempt at the propagation and achievement of such dictatorship. Such genuine and undiluted democracy is the inevitable projection and essential quality of the struggle of the exploited coloured and colonial masses of the world to achieve national emancipation and economic and social freedom.

We then come to the problem of how such national emancipation and economic and social freedom and the development of the masses are to be achieved. Both Gandhiji and Dr Sun Yat-Sen have made it clear throughout their career of revolutionary effort that mere constitutional agitation will not do; that direct action is necessary and that, therefore, revolutionary means are essential for real success. But who can provide the motive power, the initiative and the effective drive in this revolutionary struggle? So long as the struggle is in its nationalist phase, it must necessarily spring from all those sections of the oppressed peoples whose interests are in jeopardy, whose progress has been arrested, whose social and economic stamina is being sapped, and whose political needs and aspirations are being either dwarfed or starved by the imperialist system and its agents. But this does not mean that all sections of the exploited are equally capable of providing the revolutionary strength and drive to the cause of national liberation. So far as the Indian national struggle is concerned, the motive power in the early stages came from the intellectuals; then the rising industrialists joined in; later the upper middle classes flocked to the banner; and last the peasants and the proletariat. Today every group is making its own distinctive contribution to the revolutionary national struggle.

Then which among these groups can be said to form the revolutionary vanguard? Surely, it is the intellectuals, the peasants and the proletariat. We put the proletariat last because, contrary to the expectations of Socialists and Communists, the actual experience of revolutionary India has demonstrated that, owing to their numerical weakness, their proneness to be cajoled by Government at vital moments and their liability to be misled by unpatriotic pro-Russian propagandists for the one-class dictatorship the Indian proletariat has come to play only a minor role in India's struggle for freedom. And China's experience has not been very different. Indeed, in that unhappy country the proletariat has allowed itself to be so much obsessed by the anti-nationalist and exclusive one-class politics of the Communists that it has come to contribute not a little to the disruption of national unity and the weakening of Chinese national resistance to the Japanese aggressor.

But both in India and China and in countries like Ireland and Egypt as well, intellectuals—conscious of the glories of their national traditions and achievements, keen on winning for their country a place of honour in the comity of nations and bent upon winning cultural and social freedom and achieving the uplift of their nation—have taken the lead and provided the dynamism to quicken the tempo of the national revolutionary movements.

Then have come, everywhere, the peasants, with all the strength of their overwhelming numbers, their latent, irrepressible love of the land, their nationalism that springs from a passion for the land and its creative functions. Contrary to the prejudices of thinkers and administrators of the industrialized West, the peasants of the world, especially among exploited coloured people, have displayed an over-powering passion for freedom and

national emancipation. Except in certain European countries, peasants have enjoyed until almost recently, social and political freedom through their village institutions of self-government. The dictatorship of any one class or group or the exploitation of imperialism, therefore, becomes unbearable to them the moment they are awakened from their stupor. This has been the experience in India, where Mahatma Gandhi has achieved their spiritual emancipation and once again instilled self-confidence into their hearts. So the Indian peasant masses today bid fair to take their rightful place in the national revolutionary vanguard. But this is quite contrary to the stereotyped conceptions of the Communist Party. That party has failed to grow out of the ideology developed during the rapid industrialization of Western Europe in the last century and during the proletarian dictatorship of Soviet Russia in the last twenty-five years. Therefore, it is convinced that the proletariat alone is capable of forming the revolutionary vanguard of a country's struggle for emancipation, though it concedes that other sections may be flattered into some kind of partnership.

In this direction too, Mahatma Gandhi's faith, his professions and practice have been most progressive and democratic. He accepts that 'the peasant is the salt of the earth'. He recognizes in him the real enemy of all oppression. He seeks to help him to become the most effective revolutionary force. In short, he is actively building up the greatest agrarian revolutionary front.

Even in those countries like the South American Republics and the Balkan States which nominally enjoy political independence, but which need to be liberated from the economic imperialism of the United States, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. as well, it is not the proletariat but the peasantry who can provide the revolutionary



vanguard. Why? For one thing, the proletariat has not become a major political force in national politics. For another, their peasants are very active and politically awakened. There is already a peasant party, with its own ideologically mature leadership and a growing tradition of heroic sacrifices and inspiring achievements. Fourthly, nationalism will continue to be one of the major factors in their political world in view of their need to fight the influence of the imperialist Powers. Lastly, their intelligentsia as well as peasantry have learnt a lesson from the debacle of their brethren in Soviet Russia—they are determined never again to allow the proletariat to seize and exercise exclusive power in the State in the name of all toilers. This factor, more than any other, will influence all future mobilization of the revolutionary vanguard in the national as well as socialistic stages of the struggle of the exploited coloured and colonial peoples.

Therefore, it would be wise for nationalists as well as Socialists of the exploited coloured and colonial countries to concentrate on the development, training and equipment of all the three potentially revolutionary wings of the toiling masses, namely the intellectuals, kisans and mazdoors and not to be obsessed like the Communist Party with the proletariat as the only dependable revolutionary vanguard.

Then what is to be our relationship with the *bourgeoisie* of the colonial countries? Are they capable of preserving their revolutionary fervour until national emancipation has been achieved? Who can be too certain about them? But we may be sure of one thing; the *bourgeoisie* must not be allowed to throw in their lot with the imperialists and range themselves definitely against the nationalist revolution. Their own self-interest can be expected to persuade them either to be neutral or to offer

lukewarm support to the national revolution. If they feel, as they do in undeveloped countries of Asia, that they may hope to win a major share of political power after the achievement of national freedom, they may assume the leadership of the revolutionary movement. If, however, they feel, as they generally do in countries like India, that they have to face the awakened masses of peasants and workers in a struggle for political power, their confidence in the future might waver. Yet their awareness of the imperialist exploitation and their sense of frustration under it may help swing them into the ranks of the revolutionary forces. Therefore, it will depend upon the statesmanship of the vanguard of the national revolution to what extent, and at what price, the *bourgeoisie* are either neutralized or won over as partners in the national struggle.

But it will certainly not be beneficial to the toiling masses to let the effective leadership of the national revolution to pass into the hands of the *bourgeoisie*. There is bound to be a continued struggle among the principal elements participating in the national revolution for the predominant share of political power, and it will be the task of the leaders of the different sections to see that such power is retained in common and shared by every one of them. There is indeed a risk. But such risks are inherent in all revolutions and the only thing we can say for certain is that that class which is historically propelled to fight for a revolutionary change in its everyday life is likely to have the best chance of success, provided it has a conscious, determined, and disciplined leadership. But no class or section of the people is justified in holding itself aloof from the revolutionary struggle just because it does not hope to achieve what it considers to be its due share of power.

Then there is the fifth great idea—*Ahimsa* or non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi is its originator both as a

great moral idea, with the organized masses behind it, for the spiritual emancipation and exaltation of the world, and as a powerful political weapon in national or social revolutions. We are at present concerned with its political aspects.

Most revolutions are, in practice, violent upheavals. Nations have achieved power mostly through violence. But the modern world has no excuse for perpetuating violence after the bitter experience of the two devastating world wars and their failure to settle anything definitely and to assure the end of all wars. The world is sick of wars and of this mad race among nations to develop competitive machinery of violence. And rightly so.

Yet Mahatma Gandhi is realistic enough to observe that all economic, social and political problems and conflicts between one country and another may not be capable of settlement merely through negotiations or through adjudication by a world court. He realizes that there may be occasions when a country or a people may feel so intensely aggrieved that it may decide upon direct action to shock the world into a realization of the injustice done to it. Then what shall it do ?

It is not enough to say, as the Kellogg Pact did boastfully but with such poor results, that there shall be no war. There will be war. So Gandhiji says : ' Let that war be a peaceful war ; let the sufferers in it be the nationals of the aggrieved nation, and let their suffering be so intense as to melt the rest of the world and awaken it to a sense of justice and the realization that the wrong must be righted, consistently with the rights of all other countries and peoples, whether they be concerned directly or indirectly.'

Similarly when there is a struggle for power within any political party, according to Gandhiji's doctrine, the majority and the minority must show the greatest tolera-

tion towards each other. The minority has to accept the decisions of the majority. But if an inconsiderate majority drunk with power should trespass beyond the extreme limits of toleration, the minority has the right of resorting to Satyagraha to induce the former to make amends. It is only through such a weapon that differences within parties and among groups can be resolved in a peaceful and democratic manner to the advantage of all concerned.

How much more democratic and creative is this method of revolting against injustice and settling differences than the Russian or Nazi method of violently doing away with all dissentient minorities who dare to resort to direct action. The conception of settling differences non-violently assumes even greater importance when countries are ruled by single-party dictatorships and when such party is subject to strict and totalitarian internal discipline.

It is another matter if it is asked whether *Ahimsa* will prove a success. No one method or weapon assures hundred per cent success. We can but experiment with it. And experiments with *Ahimsa* cause the least suffering to the world. And certainly the experience of nationalist India since 1921 has shown that to the exploited coloured and colonial peoples, it offers the most practicable and effective anti-imperialist weapon. And since the modern world has witnessed the ghastly failure of the most highly developed machinery of violence to achieve peace and freedom, it ought to be ready to experiment with this more humane and at the same time more economical weapon of *Ahimsa*.

Now to come to Indian nationalism and its ideology, we find that its trend is towards the establishment of a democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj. Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru would deprecate the dictatorship of either the proletariat or any other class. They are bent upon

setting up in India a democratic society — not a dictatorship.

They realize the urgency of the need for securing effective political power for the peasants, the proletariat, and the professional and intellectual classes.

Indian nationalists have an abhorrence of Nazism and Fascism and of Japanese militarism. They are great believers in the World State and a world order based upon freedom for all nationalities, equality of all peoples, abolition of all kinds of exploitation and of all disabilities imposed on people by reason of their colour, creed, or history.

Indian nationalism is socialistic in its content and tendency, as the nationalism of all exploited coloured peoples is bound to be. And both Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru have declared themselves Socialists.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIALIST CONTENT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS AND INDIAN NATIONALISM

What do we mean by Socialism ?

It is planned social economy, organized in the interests of all the toilers, led by democratically chosen representatives of the masses and intended to serve as fully as possible all their material and cultural interests.

In such a society there can be no exploiting classes like the zemindars and capitalists. There can be no private property with which one may exploit others through the instrument of investment and interest.

But there can be personal property. And with it, one can obtain and enjoy anything in satisfaction of one's own or one's family's needs.

Full employment shall be provided for all. And all able-bodied persons shall be compelled to work. Everyone shall be paid according to his work and none shall be allowed to starve ; even the drone shall be forced to work for his livelihood.

Social services such as pre-natal, maternity and post-natal allowances, health and family insurance, elementary, secondary and adult education, and old age maintenance shall be organized and provided for all.

There shall also be an equitable system of distribution of all essential consumers' goods, so that while none need go without sufficient food or clothing, neither shall anyone be allowed superfluous quantities of such goods.

Producers of agricultural commodities, especially food-grains, shall be assured economic prices so that all peasants are guaranteed a progressively rising standard of living and culture.

Co-operative methods of production and distribution will be specially introduced in all agricultural and semi-agricultural operations, on the initiative and willing participation of the peasantry.

The costs of processing and distribution and other commercial services will be sought to be kept down to the minimum, whether such services be rendered by the State or middlemen or co-operatives.

It follows that all basic industries shall be owned and managed by the State either directly or indirectly, through Special Trusts appointed by itself but containing representatives of the workers engaged therein as well as of the planning authorities of associated industries.

Agriculture will be left mostly in the hands of peasants, who will own only as much land as will yield an economic return for the maintenance of each one's family. That means, such holdings as come within the terms of personal property indicated by Marx and Engels in their 'Communist Manifesto'. But all such small holdings shall be brought together into convenient and democratically organized co-operatives for purposes of economical management and scientific and progressive agriculture to ensure the maximum production.

All such lands as are not at present occupied by cultivating peasant owners, whether they belong to the State or zemindars or big 'pattadars', shall be taken over by the community and cultivated either by the State or by co-operatives specially organized by the landless peasants and peasant producers with inadequate holdings.

The present disparity between the prices of agricultural and industrial goods which operates to the disadvantage of the peasant, shall be completely eliminated.

Labour whether engaged in agriculture, industry, commerce, or other social services shall be treated alike, valued alike, remunerated alike. And the special advant-

ages that society is able to derive either from the more scientific use of land and mineral resources or the better utilization of machinery and other scientific equipment in industry, or from adoption of progressive methods of commerce, shall be placed equally at the disposal of all sections of the community alike.

The whole social edifice of production and distribution, political and social organization, and cultural life will have to be thoroughly democratic; and in every important activity, the democratic participation of the masses shall be secured to the maximum degree possible. Thus every effort will have to be made to develop a full-fledged democratic society of toilers. Such is the practical ideal of Socialism we have evolved in the light of the theoretical studies made by Western socialist thinkers and the practical experiences and the achievements as well as failures of Soviet Russia.

We may now examine how the present programme of the Indian National Congress compares with the achievements of Soviet Russia, for after all, a ton of theory is worth less than an ounce of practice.

In the U.S.S.R. all the former classes of exploiters have been eliminated. Our National Congress stands for the abolition of exploitation and exploiters.

But in the U.S.S.R. the peasants and the intellectuals and professionals (that is, the Praja) are given only a subordinate place and the political dispensation continues to be the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

On the contrary, our National Congress stands for a democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj. And Mahatma Gandhi has given pride of place to the Kisans, who form 80 per cent of our population, whereas in Russia, the proletariat, who form only 25 per cent enjoy a practical monopoly of political power. The Kisan, says Gandiji, 'is the salt of the earth'.



In the U. S. S. R. all basic and key industries are State-owned and State-managed. Our National Congress stands for such a consummation. Even to the small extent that the Indian National Congress has had a chance to create its own industrial ventures, it has tried to ban the profit motive completely and give the predominant voice to the workers. Witness for example, the ideals and practice of the All-India Spinners' Association.

The U. S. S. R. seeks to provide work for all; so does our National Congress. The former is able to organize industries and agriculture to achieve this aim. The latter has been trying to provide hand spinning, weaving and other cottage industries for as many as possible of the unemployed or under-employed. While in office, Congress Ministries took the first steps towards the collection of statistics of middle-class unemployment and the development and reorganization of small scale cottage industries.

The U. S. S. R. believes in national planning for industrial and agricultural development. So does our National Congress; hence the formation of the Indian National Planning Committee in 1938.

In the U. S. S. R. an attempt has been made, more or less successfully, to assure a minimum wage for every able-bodied worker; our National Congress too wants to secure such a minimum wage for all. As an earnest of its intentions, Mahatma Gandhi has been trying to lay down through the A. I. S. A. a minimum wage of eight annas for spinners.

In the U. S. S. R. only the right of the workers to organize themselves in Trade Unions is recognized; the peasants are not allowed to form their own peasant unions. But our National Congress recognizes the need for both peasants and workers to form their own particular class organizations.

The U. S. S. R. has not yet reached complete equality of all incomes among the various classes of people. This, Russia admits, is beyond the scope of socialist reconstruction. Gandhiji too recognizes this difficulty.

The U. S. S. R. has however been steadily trying to reduce the gap between the minimum and maximum incomes. That this is also the ideal of the Congress is amply demonstrated by the fact that a maximum monthly salary of Rs. 500 was fixed for Congress Ministers as against salaries of more than Rs. 4,000 paid to earlier non-Congress Ministers.

And now Mahatma Gandhi has given unmistakable proof of his desire to achieve Socialism in our times by insisting that all Congress workers shall strive for the abolition of economic inequalities as part of their day-to-day constructive programme.

The U.S.S.R. has recognized the equality of the sexes and has been trying to raise the status of women. Our National Congress does not lag behind in this respect. The organization of the Kasturba National Trust is only the latest addition to the long list of services rendered by the Congress to the women's cause.

The U.S.S.R. started with a strong prejudice against the institution of the family in human relations but is now being obliged to encourage the development of family life in order to increase the country's population for the purpose of defence. The National Congress has always recognized the value of the family in the national life.

The U.S.S.R. in the earliest stages, set little store by marriage and made provision for easy divorce and life outside the bonds of marriage. But experience forced her to recognize the importance of marriage. So by degrees divorce proceedings were tightened and abortions

were discouraged and finally banned. Child-bearing is extolled as a patriotic duty.

Indian nationalists have wisely tried to understand the eugenic and other social objectives of the early social planners and abstained from adopting the prejudice of theoretical Socialists and Communists against the family-marriage and child-bearing.

The U.S.S.R. made experiments in the communistic way of life, but found the socialistic way more acceptable to the nation. Russian masses could not live up to the principle of 'from each according to his ability and to each according to his need', but could be persuaded to adopt in practice the socialist teaching of 'paying each according to his contribution, but subject to a minimum and maximum limit of income and share in the social wealth'.

Mahatma Gandhi too has been making experiments, with considerable success, in the numerous Ashrams run by himself or his followers with the communist principles of life and is thus providing India with an invaluable record of communistic experience.

Soviet Russia believes in proletarianizing the peasant and industrializing agriculture. In place of small holdings and their co-operatives, she wants to develop food-growing factories.

Our National Congress does not believe in anything of the kind. It recognizes that the village has certain unique and priceless characteristics that must be preserved and developed and rationalized in the light of world's experiences. It also realizes that the peasants cannot and ought not to be proletarianized.

Indeed notwithstanding her efforts, the U. S. S. R. is faced with an irrepressible and indestructible peasant class.

Our Congress recognizes the qualitative differences between the peasantry and proletariat, as also between

the village and the town, both in respect of culture and outlook. Mahatma Gandhi wants the town to exist only as the distributing and organizing centre for the villages and thus to function not as the master of the village as at present, but as its servant.

This great difference between the Soviet and Indian approach arises from the fact that the Communists think of the world as belonging exclusively to the proletariat, whereas the Indian Socialists realize that the world truly belongs to the peasants, the proletariat and the Praja together.

• This fundamental difference is at the very bottom of the conceptions and programmes of the Western and Eastern Socialists ; that is, the Socialists of the industrial and agricultural countries.

Both the Soviets and our National Congress believe in the great need for collectivizing agriculture. But while the former have not hesitated to use all the political and economic resources of the State including naked force, to drive peasants into the Collectives, our National Congress wants to help peasants to realize the comparatively greater advantages of collectivization, through the demonstration of such advantages by organizing and running such collective farms on co-operative lines. So, the Congress Ministries did take the initiative in these directions.

The Soviets were inconsiderate about the feelings of the peasants because their inspiration and outlook was entirely proletarian, nor were they influenced by organized peasant public opinion. They were indeed often hostile to and suspicious of the peasants.

Such is certainly not the case with our National Congress. It seeks to become a peasant organization. It wants to be peasant-minded. It believes in the peasants. Therefore it wants to introduce collectivization of agri-

culture only through co-operative means and that only if such a method is proved to be definitely advantageous not only to the consumers, but also to the producers.

Stalin has paid lip-homage to such an ideal, but his Soviets have observed it only in the breach.

The U. S. S. R. is pre-eminently a land for the proletariat and not for the peasant. Nationalist India wishes to be primarily a land for the peasantry and principally a democratic society of peasants, the proletariat and the Praja.

To this essential difference is due the horror felt so genuinely and rightly by nationalist India and her Socialist Congressmen at the unparalleled persecution of Russian peasants at the hands of the power-mad Communists and the hunger-driven and all-powerful proletariat. The millions of Russian peasants who were killed in the struggle that followed the proletarian military offensive against the peasants, the many more who were left to die of starvation as a reprisal for the grain-strikes, and nearly as many more who were uprooted forcibly from their ancestral villages and taken to concentration camps and sent into forced labour, warned Socialists of the East against any dictatorship of the proletariat, the murderous propensities of hungry towns and the danger of class dictatorship\*.

Therefore, it is not merely a matter of what method—whether co-operative and entirely democratic or coercive and dictatorial—is adopted in reorganizing agriculture. It is essentially a question of the approach to the peasant. The Russian approach is dictatorial, proletarian, urban, anti-peasant; ours essentially democratic and human. In short, the one is violent, and the other non-violent.

Both the U. S. S. R. and our National Congress wish to abolish poverty and unemployment. They can do so

\* Even Webbs' *Soviet Communism* admits this, though apologetically.

only by providing everyone with work—work that is purposive, is useful to society, and contributes to the aims, ideals and characteristics of that society.

Soviet Russia has chosen to urbanize and industrialize life, for, only that way can it secure the permanence of its proletarian dictatorship.

Eastern Socialists on the contrary are opposed to such ideals. So, while the former build feverishly for great industrial concerns, producing citizens with little purposive work, and making a virtue of the mechanization of social life, the latter plan for harmony between machine production and cottage work, between mechanization and humanization of employment in order to save toilers from wasteful soul-killing toil, while assuring to everyone a minimum of useful work at some craft or other.

So to the U.S.S.R. cottage industries are anathema, while to the Eastern Socialist they are an essential element both in the economic and social structure of life.

Both desire to mechanize basic industries and run them on Western lines. But Eastern Socialists, unlike Soviet planners do want as much of the field of production of consumer's goods as possible reserved for cottage industries, organized on co-operative lines.

The U.S.S.R. has made great strides in providing industrial training for the largest numbers of youth and children, besides giving them elementary education. Both general and occupational training are incorporated in the syllabus of her elementary and secondary educational systems.

The Indian National Congress too aims at a similar system through its Basic Education Scheme, known as the Wardha Scheme.

The vocational training given in both is particularly suited to the varying conditions in the U.S.S.R. and India.

If Socialist Russia can afford the latest equipment in her schools, India can only provide the tools for hand-spinning, weaving and other similar handicrafts.

But the aim is the same; the method is the same; that is, to provide education to all children up to the sixteenth year of their age—education comprising vocational training and equipment.

Soviet Russia has been busy hitherto training children and adults to become healthy, educated and well-behaved citizens.

Gandhiji and other Eastern Socialists want to achieve much more. They want to help human beings not only to become strong, healthy, educated, and powerful, but also good and great servants of human civilization, that is, *Vijnanis*.

Soviet Russia is wedded to the ideal of world citizenship and internationalism. So are Gandhiji, Nehru and the Socialists of the East. Here they are only following the cultural heritage of the Orient, whose symbol is the Sanyasin, one who knows no caste or creed, nationality or race, country or continent, and to whom all mankind, all living beings and, indeed, every sentient thing in the world is kith and kin, and whose sacred duty is to serve all equally.

Soviet Russia has yet to grasp this exalted and noble ideal. In practice, Soviet Russia has, since 1941 (if not earlier) given up her professions of international responsibilities and has concentrated mostly on her own national problems. Hence the abolition of the Communist International. Indian and Chinese nationalism has, on the other hand, been reaching out towards internationalism during this very period in which Russia has been withdrawing into the shell of nationalism.

Even as the Third International was being liquidated by Soviet Russia, the Freedom Front of the exploited

coloured and colonial peoples was emerging as a potent international force. While M. Stalin in the stress of a great struggle was rousing the nationalist passions of his people and replacing the Internationale by the new Russian national anthem, both Gandhiji and Chiang Kai-shek were striving to develop international contacts and to champion the cause of all suppressed coloured peoples.

As to the means to achieve these ends, Soviet Russia has depended mainly on organized State violence, though propaganda and education have also played a considerable role. But State and party violence came foremost either in the suppression of peasant revolts or in the liquidation of militant obstructionist minorities in the Communist Party itself.

Gandhiji does not believe in such methods. That does not mean, however, that he agrees with European Socialists who can visualize progress only through constitutional means. He is essentially no parliamentarian. He believes in direct methods. He is fundamentally a revolutionary. He has forged the weapon of 'Satyagraha'. And all persons convinced that their cause is just, can employ this extra-legal unconstitutional but non-violent means and brave the organized might of the State, if need be.

Indeed, by this means, Gandhiji hopes even to liquidate the zemindari and capitalist systems. He does not, therefore, compromise as do Western Socialists, with any system of exploitation. He tolerates them for the time being, and seeks to constrain them, through State regulation, to carry on as trustees functioning on behalf of society and responsible to it. If when the masses gain control of the State they should decide that there is no longer the need for such trustees, they would be free to replace them with other social institutions. In hastening such a transformation, the weapon of Satyagraha could



be used from time to time. The only thing Gandhiji would object to is the use of violence by private bodies of people against such trustees before they have been given the opportunity to justify themselves by the discharge of their duties exclusively in the interests of society and the masses.

Western Socialists, Soviet Russia and the Communist Party have so far failed to realize that the greatest problem of the world is not the exploitation of the proletariat by employees, but the exploitation of the 120 crores of peasants by the forty crores of the industrial and commercial classes of the world.

The achievement of equality of distribution of wealth between the industrial and commercial classes on the one side and the agricultural classes on the other is the Gandhian ideal.

Gandhiji and Dr Sun Yat-Sen have realized that this is the problem of problems and that the liquidation of exploitation is the noblest objective that contemporary humanity can address itself to.

Soviet Russia has not yet succeeded in abolishing inequality of distribution of her own national wealth between her industrial and commercial sections and the agricultural masses. In fact, her three much-vaunted five-year plans and her socialist structure of industry and urban life have been achieved during the last 28 years as the result of a glaring and ruthless exploitation of her vast agrarian masses and of inequality of distribution of wealth between her urban and rural masses. The Soviets 'scissors' crises of 1919-1939, that is, the periods when agricultural prices were much lower than industrial prices were only the visible indications of this soulless exploitation of the peasantry by the State in the interests of the proletariat.

The Communists and Socialists of the West have not yet realized the magnitude of this problem, nor have they

begun to see that the Socialists' main task is the elimination of this exploitation.

They are still obsessed with the 100 year old fetish of eliminating inequalities between the employer and employee and the industrialist and the proletariat.

Gandhiji, Dr Sun, Mr Brailsford, and Pandit Nehru have touched this sore spot in society and Gandhiji and the Indian and Balkan peasants alone have cried out boldly that an attempt must be made to solve this problem before there can be any real beginning towards Socialism.

Through its Karachi charter of Fundamental Rights, the Faizpur agrarian programme, the fifteen-point constructive programme of Gandhiji, the growing edifice of Gandhian institutions for all-round social and economic reconstruction, Pandit Nehru's socialist drive towards National Planning and the latest declaration of Gandhiji that Congress stands for Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj, the Indian National Congress has shown that it is thinking and working and moving along socialist lines. But it works for the peasant, on democratic, non-violent lines, on a pattern suited to the traditions of the oriental and coloured peoples, not in any slavish imitation of the one-sided Socialist of the West.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GROWTH OF SOCIALIST CONTENT OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

( IN PRACTICE )

During the last century, the Indian National Congress strove only for a representative Government within the framework of British hegemony.

It was Dadabhai Naorojee, the Grand Old Man of Indian Nationalism who declared at the Calcutta Congress of 1906 that India's ideal was the achievement of Swaraj.

Until then Indian leaders had referred to Western politics and the type of self-rule prevailing in Europe to make people understand what Swaraj meant. Gandhiji, in 1920, taught our masses to invoke the aid of their own rich cultural heritage; Swaraj, he tried to make them understand, was only another name for Ram Raj. How wrong are Mr Jinnah and others like him who read some sinister religious motive into this masterstroke of genius!

Ram Raj even today stands in the minds of both Hindus and millions of other Indians for a happy, prosperous and progressive State, united and with a responsible and responsive national leadership, wherein public opinion is carefully and scrupulously weighed and everyone from the ruler at the top to the smallest individual at the bottom submits to the sovereignty of law.

There were many evils rampant, it is true, even in the days of Lord Rama. But the popular conception of Ram Raj today ignores such evils and stresses only its manifold blessings. Neither is the idea of Ram Raj associated with any particular religion.

It is only what it has come to mean to the ordinary man-in-the-street that Gandhiji and other Indian leaders

envisioned in the slogan, 'Swaraj is Ram Raj'; and Mr Jinnah had no quarrel with it until 1934.

The Bengal partition movement of 1907, Tilak's bold stand against the British Government and his declaration that 'Swaraj is my birthright', the success of Gandhiji's Satyagraha campaign in South Africa, all paved the way to the awakening of our intelligentsia and of growing sections of the urban and rural population. The War did its own work.

The Home Rule movement of Annie Besant (1916-19) provided the people with a dynamic organization and a militant ideal.

During the first World War, the Congress marched forward politically and made demands on the British who were compelled to offer the Montford scheme, and concede to Indians the right to a responsible and representative Government under the aegis of the British Commonwealth. The Amritsar tragedy, following the Rowlatt Act, caused discontent to grow by leaps and bounds. The country needed a leader, an organization, an effective revolutionary ideology, and a new weapon.

As if in response to this, Mahatmaji appeared on the scene with his weapon of Satyagraha, his genius for exacting obedience and discipline from the masses, his uncompromising stand against imperialism, and his lofty moral condemnation of the bankrupt and disintegrating civilization of the West.

In 1917, Gandhiji reminded the Indian Princes, at the inaugural ceremony of the Hindu University of Benares that their riches were built upon the sufferings of the peasants and exhorted them to utilize their revenues, not for their own personal aggrandizement but for the uplift of their subjects.

That speech upset the assembled Maharajahs. Several of them left the gathering abruptly. Gandhiji discovered

then that his attitude did not please either the vested interests or the national leaders of the day headed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Annie Besant. He realized too that India was not yet ripe for his leadership. So, he suspended his tirades against vested interests and curbed his impetuosity.

Instead, he rushed to the rescue of the peasants of Champaran, offered Satyagraha on their behalf, organized them for direct action and showed the way for the new peasant movement.

He followed this up by organizing the peasants of Kaira and Bardoli for famine relief and tax remissions.

In both instances, he conducted careful economic surveys, preparing a schedule of the peasants' grievances and demands. This initiated the techniques of the modern Indian peasant movement.

He led the Ahmedabad mill workers' strike, averting failure by resorting to Satyagraha against blacklegs and forcing the employers to yield.

He set up at Ahmedabad, something Government had never done, and what only the textile workers of Lancashire had secured—voluntary Arbitration Authority for settling all wage disputes between employers and employees. He was truly a pioneer in the organization of labour in India.

He inaugurated a novel but successful Satyagraha campaign against the infamous Rowlatt Act and thus inspired the intellectuals with new confidence in waging a direct campaign against the mighty British Empire.

It was with such mass contacts and mass struggles to his credit that Gandhiji inaugurated the great non-co-operation movement of 1921-22.

Ever since he assumed the leadership of the non-co-operation movement the rural masses have been awakened from their apathy and brought into the orbit of Indian

nationalism; the peasants have been taught to think in terms of their economic and social problems and that against the background of national interests.

The campaign for the abolition of untouchability, the promotion of Khaddar and cottage industries, the struggle to forge Hindu-Muslim unity, the drive to purge the country of the drink evil have all brought social and economic issues into the general political activity.

Gandhiji tried again in 1930 to rivet people's minds on economic needs of the masses through his eleven-point ultimatum to the Viceroy (then Lord Irwin) and his Salt Satyagraha campaign.

The Satyagraha of 1930 made our struggle for freedom a mass movement. It helped peasants in several provinces to wage a determined struggle for the redress of their economic grievances,—witness the no-tax, no-rent and forest Satyagrahas.

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 introduced a new feature into Indian politics—that every political or economic move of the British must be viewed solely from the standpoint of India's interests.

Gandhiji's speech on 'Commercial Discrimination' at the Round Table Conference emphasized that all vested interests, whether Indian or British, that could not be demonstrated to be 'in the interests of the toiling masses of India', should go.

During that period of truce in 1931-2, the Karachi Congress passed the resolution of the Fundamental Rights (thanks to Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru), laying special stress on the need for redressing several specific grievances of the peasants, workers and the middle-class and for assuring them of a brighter social and political future in a free India.

Even in the process of winning Swaraj, the Congress is expected to work for the fulfilment of this Karachi

charter, as amplified by the Election Manifesto and the Faizpur Agrarian Programme (1936). Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru, the Kisan Congress, and Congress Ministers while in power have striven to see that the terms of these charters are fulfilled.

It is true that the stand then taken by Gandhiji on the Kisans' demand for the abolition of the zemindari system was not quite satisfactory. But it is equally true that he has always favoured the abolition of, not only the zemindari system, but also the capitalist system. At Venkatagiri in 1934, he told the peasants that the abolition of the zemindari system might not come through mere legislative measures, and that they should be prepared to resort to Satyagraha if legislation failed to give them satisfaction.

His later moves seemingly unsatisfactory are not really reactionary, if judged from the standpoint of the immediate exigencies of the national struggle. For his primary task has been to build up a strong and united National front against British Imperialism, and he would agree to, and work for the achievement of, only such economic and social reorganization as would not militate against the chances of a united front.

Indeed, we can now see, in the light of our war-time experiences, that our insistence on the immediate abolition of the zemindari system, without adequate compensation, could not have been justified.

Pandit Nehru was right in supporting Gandhiji in his insistence that Swaraj must come before any socialist revolution. At best, the Congress could pave the way towards Socialism after the advent of Swaraj, by directing its efforts giving a socialist orientation to all political and social activities, by organizing the peasants and workers and also by awakening, educating and liberating the great mass of Harijans.

Gandhiji's work for the Harijans is truly revolutionary. To rid them of their fatalism, to free them from a centuries-old social slavery and to launch them into society once again as self-respecting citizens, is the most magnificent social and political achievement of modern times.

Gandhiji wants Swaraj only for the *Daridranarayana*, the poorest of the poor.

For the abolition of Indian capitalism, he offers his solution of decentralized, co-operative cottage industries, and the socialization of key industries.

To undo the mischief of world capitalism and imperialism, he suggests the development of concentric circles of territories, self-sufficient in the matter of food, clothing, etc. Such self-sufficiency is to be achieved through co-operative efforts and the application of scientific methods.

To minimize the tax-burdens on the masses, to liberate them from the spectre of conscription and other war-time measures, he seeks to achieve a World State.

He seeks, too, to minimize the growth of parasitical classes and to free toilers from the incubus of a top-heavy administration, to regenerate the village, to renovate rural economy, and to revolutionize India's economy on non-capitalist lines.

The second World War has revolutionized the Congress attitude towards the world as well as towards internal social problems.

The organization of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, was an outstanding event in the history of Indian Nationalism. This Party did much to help an increasing number of Congressmen and other nationalists to re-examine the fundamental principles that guide and govern the nationalist movement among the oppressed races and peoples of the world. It is true its earlier conceptions of



the roles that Socialism and Nationalism play in the colonial world and its reactions to the historical traditions and religious, social and economic background of colonial people with such an old civilization and culture as that of India have had to undergo radical changes before it could win its way into the hearts of the rank and file of Congressmen. But thanks to the statesmanship of its leadership and to the inspiration it derived from the unswerving idealism of Pandit Nehru, it was able to understand the revolutionary significance of dynamic non-violence and place itself entirely at the disposal of the National Congress and its leader, Mahatma Gandhi. Thus, it has had the distinction of raising, with the co-operation of the patriotic class organizations of peasants, workers and others, the socialist content of the Congress. And today every Congressman is able to declare himself proudly and with conviction that he is a socialist patriot determined to fight world capitalism and imperialism. Thus the Gandhian way has become synonymous with the socialist way of all patriots.

Pandit Nehru's contribution towards the growth of the socialist content of the Congress cannot be exaggerated. His presidential speeches at the Lahore (1929) and Lucknow (1936) sessions gave a clear socialist turn to Congress ideology. His *Whither India?* helped Indian nationalism to ally itself with Socialism. His moral and material support to the general line of the Congress Socialist Party has enabled Indian patriots consciously to study and understand the place and significance of Socialism in our national struggle against imperialism. All this paved the way for the open declaration of Mahatma Gandhi: 'I am also a Socialist'—but with Satyagraha as his weapon and sanction.

Now to come to Indian nationalism and its ideology, we find that its momentum is towards the achievement of

the democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj, both during and after the national revolution.

Neither Gandhiji nor Pandit Nehru desires the dictatorship of either the proletariat or any other class of toilers. They are bent on achieving for India a democratic society—not a dictatorship. They realize the urgency of the need for securing effective political power for the peasants, the proletariat and the Praja or the professional and intellectual classes.

Indian nationalists have an intense horror of Nazism and Fascism and Japanese militarism. Even in their treatment of minorities in the country and within their own ranks, Congressmen want to avoid all use of violence.

They are great believers in a World State and a world order based upon freedom for all nationalities, equality of all peoples, abolition of all kinds of exploitation and also of all distinctions and disabilities based on colour, creed, or history.

The Congress has now emerged as the greatest champion of all colonial and enslaved peoples.

It stands for the immediate establishment of a World State and for the abolition of all national armies, etc.

It was prepared to modify its policy of non-violence in order to allow the Government of a Free India to co-operate with the World State in maintaining world peace—if need be, with armed force; indeed, even to co-operate with the Allied Nations during the war.

The Congress has ranged itself on the side of the Socialists by declaring at its Ramgarh session (1940) that the present unjust social order should be replaced by a juster social order.

It adopted a more definite and positive socialist stand by declaring during the revolution of August 1942 that it favoured the achievement of a democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj.

And in his elucidation of that fateful resolution, Gandhiji has stated that, not only after the achievement of Swaraj, but from then on 'the Congress works for the achievement of democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj' (December 1944).

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The Congress stands for the following fundamental rights :

1. (i) Freedom of association and combination.  
(ii) Equal rights and obligations of all citizens.  
No civic bar on account of sex.  
(iii) Equal rights to all citizens of access to, and use of, public roads, public wells and all other places of public resort.
2. (i) A living wage for industrial workers, etc. (i.e., social security).  
(ii) The Faizpur agrarian programme (of 1936) has added a living wage for agricultural workers.
3. Labour to be freed from serfdom or conditions bordering on serfdom.
4. Protection of women workers, etc.
5. Prohibition of employment of children of school-going age in factories.
6. (i) Right of labour to form unions.  
(ii) In 1936, the right of peasants to form their own unions was also added.
7. (i) Substantial reduction of land revenue and rent, and in cases of uneconomic holdings, exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary.  
(ii) Cancellation of rent (arrears) was added in 1936.
8. Imposition of a progressive income-tax on agricultural income above a fixed income.
9. A graduated inheritance tax.
10. As added by the Faizpur Congress declaration of moratorium for agricultural indebtedness and scaling

down of peasants' debts in proportion to the fall in prices of agricultural produce and lands.

11. Adult suffrage.

12. Military expenditure to be reduced by at least one-half of the present scale.

13. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments to be largely reduced. Maximum salaries ordinarily not to exceed Rs. 500 per month.

14. Protection of indigenous cloth by exclusion of foreign cloth and yarn from the country.

15. Total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

16. No duty on salt.

17. State regulation of the exchange ratio so as to help Indian industries, and

18. Control by the State of key industries and mineral resources.

19. Control of usury—direct or indirect.

And this charter is liable to be amended.

#### GANDHIJI ON THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

‘It is meant to indicate to poor inarticulate India the broad feature of Swaraj or Ram Raj. *Before my march to Dandi, I had included some of these features in my eleven points.* Those have been made more comprehensive.

‘These points are also meant to forewarn all people concerned.

‘They must bear in mind that the poor man's Swaraj is soon coming and let them not be found unprepared when it actually comes.’

## CHAPTER IV

### NATIONALISM-CUM-SOCIALISM

In our first chapter, we saw how the five great ideas of the present-day world are likely to serve the needs of the people, if used in the right way. We shall now examine how wrong combinations of either those ideas or their opposites are likely to cause immense harm to the masses.

The confluence of nationalism and Socialism is likely to generate an explosive force. If dictatorship should also exist side by side, the consequences would be fearful indeed.

It would be difficult for this trinity not to invoke the aid of the evil weapon of violence. And it is the combination of these four ideas and their institutional forms that has brought the greatest disaster upon the peoples of the world. For it was this combination that created Nazi Germany, which was responsible for the untold miseries of the rest of the world between 1938-45.

It has been at the bottom of the abominations of concentration camps, the Jew-baiting, the ruthless annexation of weak neighbouring States and the total suppression of rival political parties and minorities.

Even in Russia, the combination of Socialism, dictatorship and violence led Stalin to liquidate by the most cruel methods the independent peasantry and its leaders, the Socialist-revolutionaries, the Trotskyists and all other political minorities that dared question the supremacy of the ruling section of the Communist Party.

That the combination of nationalism, Socialism, dictatorship and violence may result in unashamed imperialism and barefaced aggression was clearly demonstrated by Nazi Germany's behaviour during 1936-45.

That a combination of avowed internationalism with its indifference to the principle of self-determination for peoples and unavowed but scarcely disguised nationalism, together with violence and dictatorship and a Socialism that affects contempt for all nationalist and liberal conceptions of life, may also prove a menace to peace is shown by the harsh and arbitrary treatment meted out to Finland and the tiny Baltic States by Soviet Russia.

If these forces are also allied to economic imperialism, it can only lead to such horrors as the Nazi exploitation of occupied Europe. With this unholy combination, Socialism at home is compatible with unashamed imperialistic domination over subject countries. Paradoxical as this may appear, it is not much different from a democratic Britain's role as a naked imperial power in the colonial countries of the Empire.

Moreover, Socialism and the dictatorship of one class, when combined with violence, are equally likely to prove reactionary. For instance, the nationalism of the French revolutionaries produced an explosion that shook the Continent of Europe to its very foundations. Again, in Soviet Russia, the violent dictatorship of the proletariat has caused untold sufferings to the peasants.

Violence and dictatorship are at the root of all undemocratic and inhuman activity. And these evil forces have invariably operated to the detriment of the toiling masses, or at least some sections of them. In Soviet Russia, they worked against the peasants in particular. Therefore, one who wishes to safe-guard the progress and welfare of the toiling masses and preserve democracy, must necessarily favour non-violent means.

Only through scrupulous respect for others' interests, can any people ensure for themselves the enjoyment of democratic rights and privileges and the opportunities for advancement.

Democracy is possible only in a non-violent atmosphere. And Gandhiji is perfectly right in asserting that in a really democratic society based on and functioning through non-violence, no vested interests and no system of exploitation can possibly exist even for a day, for only through violence can injustice and exploitation be maintained. For a certain period at some crucial stage of the national revolution it may be necessary, even advantageous to use the minimum of force strictly through the agency of the State, to restrain anti-national or undemocratic activities of certain organizations or sections of the people. The best safe-guard against the misuse of such public use of force is to make the State completely democratic.

Force thus *may* be used, but with safe-guards and for progressive purposes only and when all classes of toilers have their proper share in the democratic State.

To ensure happiness and prosperity to the masses, the State shall be democratic, functioning through non-violent means so far as its internal affairs are concerned ; mainly it shall also be socialistic and fulfil the people's fundamental urge towards nationalism.

Dictatorship whether of the proletariat, the peasantry, or the intellectuals, cannot help to foster democracy and Socialism. And passionate nationalism uncontrolled by democracy and non-violence, and unharnessed to Socialism is easily liable to play into the hands of dictators.

Happily for India, the Gandhi-Nehru combination and the continuous process of widening the mass basis of the National Congress have kept our own revolutionary movement away from these evils ; it is today wedded to the ideals of democracy, non-violence, Socialism, and internationalism.

Nationalism-cum-Socialism, harnessed to democracy and functioning through non-violent methods within the



orbit of a World State, with a world defence force, can surely promote all-round progress within every healthy nationalist society. It can also ensure the employment of full political and economic power and the opportunities for self-government to all classes of toilers.

Today Russian Socialist practice has not achieved such a synthesis. It is too aggressive in its impact upon other nationalities, too violent in its dealings with other peoples, too sectarian in its treatment of the peasants and 'Praja', and generally too self-centred and power-mad.

By far the happiest and most satisfactory combination of modern ideas and social forces is being suggested' by the increasing trend towards Socialism of Indian nationalism, harnessed as it is to non-violence and democracy.

## CHAPTER V

### INDIAN NATIONALISM IS NO NEGATIVE FORCE

Let us clear up some misconceptions. The nationalism of the oppressed coloured peoples is not opposed to internationalism. On the contrary, it is the biggest force operating to make them more and more international-minded.

Even the nationalism of independent European and American peoples is but a stepping-stone towards internationalism.

Nationalism and internationalism are not antagonistic, but complementary; they are not irreconcilable forces.

If Indian nationalists and Socialists are opposed to communist Russia's practice of dictatorship of the proletariat, it is not that they are in any way opposed to the welfare of the proletariat. It is only that they are opposed to any class dictatorship. They want a real democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj, which alone can represent the 'overwhelming majority of the toilers', as laid down in the Communist Manifesto.

It is wrong to imagine that Indian Nationalism is opposed to Socialism or that these two forces are irreconcilable. Indeed, the two can always work in harmony.

They have been clubbed together in two different ways in Germany and Russia. In Germany, nationalism is the predominant factor. In Russia, it is Socialism that dominates. The former is National Socialism and the latter Socialist Nationalism.

- India's Socialistic nationalism shall not be mixed up with the National socialism or Nazism of Germany, or the Socialist Nationalism of Soviet Russia.

Germany had imperialist ambitions. Chinese and Indian Nationalism is opposed to all kinds of imperialism.

Russia has been moving away from internationalism towards nationalism ; while China and India are marching forward from nationalism towards internationalism.

It is a mistake to think, as M. Stalin seems to do, that Indian nationalism is a by-product of Indian capitalism. That is an utterly erroneous interpretation of history. Indian nationalism has developed into a world force through its own historical laws of growth.

It was the intellectuals and professional classes thwarted, suppressed and humiliated who first awoke to their national duty. They it was who founded the Indian National Congress in 1885.

Not until 1908 did certain Indian businessmen realize the need for such an institution to guide the nationalist movement.

Indeed the Swadeshi campaign of 1908 was the by-product of Indian nationalism.

Even today, only a small section of Indian capitalists support the nationalist movement. Even fewer have joined the national revolution.

There is no need to non-co-operate with the capitalist. In fact, it is of the utmost importance not to drive him into the opposite camp. It is enough if we manage to neutralize our capitalist classes in the national struggle for freedom.

The Indian capitalist is a very slippery customer. At the slightest provocation, he tends to cross over into the opposite camp to reinforce our enemies.

Hence Gandhiji's caution against aggressive fire-eating Socialism which might serve only to strengthen the British.

As it is, Indian Nationalism has more enemies than it can reasonably contend with. There are always the chicken-hearted, the cowardly and the opportunists. They generally form Aman Sabhas. In addition, there are

persons who are discontented with the many injustices incidental to our ancient dilapidated Indian society and who therefore imagine that they stand to gain by supporting British Raj.

These unpatriotic groups have come to be reinforced by two other political bodies—the Muslim League and the Communist Party.

These, the latest among the anti-national forces, have already begun to stab the nationalist movement in the back.

The Communists and Royists pretended until the other day that they were even more patriotic and anti-imperialist than the National Congress. But, in the moment of trial, during World War II, they turned against the Indian national revolution and joined forces with the British.

They did their worst to confuse the masses during the defensive struggle of Indian nationalism in 1942-44 to weaken them and to kill their revolutionary fervour. They betrayed a large number of patriots; they labelled many more fifth-columnists and saboteurs, and they raised unpatriotic slogans. They openly helped the British in the war-time exploitation of the Indian masses and thus bore part of the responsibility for the terrible famine in the country.

The Muslim League was no less troublesome. The leaders of the League pretended to discover in every anti-imperialist move on the part of the National Congress an anti-Muslim manoeuvre. They joined with the Communists and Royists in fighting the Satyagraha movement of 1940-41 and in weakening national resistance to the Imperialist offensive of 1942-44. They went to the extent of welcoming the resignation of the Congress Ministries, which had enjoyed the confidence of the masses and which had rendered such revolutionary assistance to the peasants and the proletariat.

Both the League and the Communist Party are straining every nerve to split this country into a number of independent States, each with its separate defence forces and foreign, political, economic and defence policies; thus they plot to break up India's hard-won political unity. The risk of such independent States falling out and waging wasteful wars against one another—that seems to bother them little.

Even the Congress suggestion that the question of Pakistan might be left to be settled by the people of the proposed Pakistan areas themselves met with the League demand that the plebiscite apply exclusively to the Muslims of such territories. The Communist Party, however, does not want a plebiscite even under the limited auspices suggested by the League, and favours invoking public opinion only for settling the constitution of Pakistan.

Thus, the number of enemies of Indian nationalism and Indian unity is being swollen from among the ranks of politically-minded parties.

As if this were not enough, Dr Ambedkar has gone over to the British Government and is trying to create a new bogey. The British pretend that the thousands of public-spirited Harijans who have come to hold responsible positions in Indian Public life and in various legislative and local self-government institutions do not represent the Harijans, and that the handful of picked, non-elected men of Dr Ambedkar's choice alone can speak for the great body of Harijans. We should not be surprised if one fine morning, the Communist Party plumps for these unrepresentative Harijans and urge Indian nationalists to recognize these Ambedkarites as true Harijan leaders; for it would be in keeping with that Party's disruptive tactics.

In these circumstances, it is wise for all genuine Indian nationalists to help the National Congress to

consolidate their own ranks and not to help awaken anti-national and anti-imperialist elements.

Indian nationalism is not a negative force. Its anti-imperialism is its finest contribution to the present-day world. Its anti-capitalist programme is another significant contribution. Its attempt to maintain the political unity of India is symbolic of its progressive spirit. Equally worthy of mention is its readiness to recognize the rights of various peoples with different cultures and religious affiliations to the greatest group freedom and political autonomy, provided they are content to live within the same over-all national political system. The National Congress has recognized the need of the Indian masses to organize themselves in class organizations, not only to solve their day-to-day problems and to secure freedom, but also to establish Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj, and has come forward to organize them on that basis.

Alone among the various manifestations of nationalist ferment in this world, the National Congress has absorbed the message of great men like Pandit Nehru and Kisan and Mazdoor Congress leaders, and is stimulating the national and class consciousness of the toiling masses.

It points the way to all other nationalist movements in giving a definite socialist turn to the freedom movements and in developing an internationalist outlook in a nationalist world.

Let any one who doubts the progressive spirit of nationalism witness the metamorphosis that Soviet Russia is undergoing in the hour of her national resurgence and triumphs over Nazi Germany. Soviet Russia has reasserted, with all fire and frenzy of her warlike masses, her loyalty to conceptions like the Fatherland, the national flag and the national anthem. She has liquidated the Third International and freed herself completely for the pursuit of nationalistic policies. She has given up her

self-imposed international socialist responsibilities and is concentrating on national reconstruction. She has come to depend on nationalism because she has discovered, thanks to the impact of the World War, that nationalism is, and can be, a progressive revolutionary force even in a socialist world.

Indian leaders have been trying to shoulder international responsibilities even while Soviet Russia has been turning to nationalism. The Indian National Congress has tried not only to extend its moral support to Abyssinia, Spain, and China, but also to render effective help to these unhappy countries in their struggle against Imperialism and Fascism.

Therefore, it is a calumny to say that the National Congress is Fascist in its sympathies or that our nationalism is a retrogressive force.

## CHAPTER VI

### NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

Nationalism and religion are both fundamental. Nationalism is a basic force with all peoples. It has its roots in the family, clan and tribal loyalties, cultural, linguistic and territorial associations.

It is independent of capitalism. Yet, it is intertwined with the economic needs, relations and activities of the masses.

To maintain that it is a by-product of capitalism is a Marxian mistake. Marx held that internationalism alone could, and ought to have a claim on the proletariat. Lenin persisted in this mistake until 1917.

Hence, the war-time Leninist slogan of revolutionary defeatism. That failed, though the majority accepted it; most of the delegates who took part in that historic conference, even those who had subscribed to that creed, responded enthusiastically to nationalism on their return to their own countries. To ignore nationalism, therefore, is impracticable.

Stalin's contribution was decisive. He was a Georgian, one of the exploited nationalities and was aware of the importance of nationalism. He was, therefore, able to develop his theories of nationalism.

Lenin modified his ideas in the light of Stalin's experience and the Revolution of 1917. At first nationalism was invoked for purposes of waging the war. But the war exhausted the country's potentialities and led to economic civil war. But later when the masses secured power, the country came to mean more to them and they harkened to the call of nationalism and helped defeat the counter-revolution.

Nationalism is both a positive and negative force. It can be exploited either by the upper classes or the lower.



*Religion* : The evolution of the idea of Yagna—from the sacrifice of human beings (of one's own family or from among one's enemies) to that of animals, rice or images, to the sacrifice of one's passions, one's property and one's self for the sake of society—has been eventful.

Religion is a basic force with the masses, as strong and fundamental as nationalism.

Influenced by Western liberalism, the Indian National Congress does not allow itself to be influenced by religion. But let us look at the period from 1937 to 1944. The champions of Pakistan have grown to power. The League may be manned by the *bourgeoisie*. But it stands for something tangible in the minds of the Muslims, that is Pakistan.

Like the Jews, the Muslims too formed a nationality. But they could not become a nation, for they had no common territory, no common language, no common cultural tradition to cling to. So the Socialists have to count with religion as a political factor.

There is a wrong impression current that Gandhiji has introduced religion into politics. The truth is that he brought politics to a religious-minded India. The Indian masses are nothing if not religious. Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Rama Tirtha and Swami Dayanand awakened our peoples' religious consciousness and thus rendered invaluable service to our nascent nationalism. Tilak and Gandhiji planted politics on that 'live' consciousness. The Ali brothers followed their great example and tried to supplement the religio-political work of Sir Syed Ahmed by turning the League into a political body. Mr Jinnah is only following in their foot-steps. But there is a difference between Gandhiji's use of religion and Mr Jinnah's. The former would turn Muslims against Indian nationalism.

Lenin warned his followers that none should be excluded from the Communist Party merely on the ground that he is religious. Though religion may truly be the opium of the masses, to fight against religion is not the Communist's task, said Lenin. His *Socialism and Religion* is explicit on this point.

The exploited colonial and coloured peoples cannot, therefore, afford to neglect the power or even the utility of religion in politics. It is an even more potent influence in African countries whose Negro tribes cling tenaciously to their religious conceptions.

Socialist nationalism will have to make a special study of the political potentialities of religion and invoke its aid in the revolutionary campaign against imperialism.

## CHAPTER VII

### NATIONALISM CAN BE A SOCIALY EVOLUTIONARY FORCE

Socialism has to recognize the revolutionary potentialities of nationalism.

Hitler and Mussolini used nationalism to further their chauvinistic ambitions. But, Cardenas and Gandhiji have used it for progressive purposes.

Cardenas of Mexico confiscated the colossal oil interests of Britain and the U.S.A., broke up the larger estates and promoted collective farming and workers' management of industry. He was not an avowed Socialist or Communist. He was a nationalist, social revolutionary.

De Valera of Ireland repudiated the land annuities payable to England in return for estates taken over from English landlords during the nineteenth century. He developed agricultural co-operatives and other similar institutions.

Kemal Pasha of Turkey abolished purdah, introduced State industries, provided education for the masses, supplied State and co-operative credit to peasants, and controlled and regulated foreign imports and foreign capital.

Chiang Kai-shek of China undermined landlordism and 'sahukarism', provided State and co-operative credit and introduced co-operative marketing. His New Life Movement is a vital force in China. Indusco is reviving cottage industries on co-operative lines.

Gandhiji has declared, in his theory of trusteeship, that capitalists are not the owners of capital, but only trustees; that the masses are the real owners; that once the masses organize themselves and demand the return of their capital the capitalist must render accounts. Same goes for landlords. His was an exhortation to both

capitalists and workers. The Ahmedabad Textile Arbitration Board, which owes its inspiration to Gandhiji, has established the principle that the employers have to learn to treat workers as a body with equal interests in the welfare of the industry.

Gandhiji wants to abolish class struggle too: in the society he envisages there shall be no distinctions of class. He desires the elimination of capitalists and landlords. But as the most pressing need today is a united front, he deems it inadvisable for the Congress to demand their immediate abolition. He has, however, provided for the State regulation of this 'trusteeship'. So it would be open to our legislatures to modify the rights and duties of such trustees.

It is this revolutionary nationalism that has to be harnessed to Socialism. Without nationalism, Socialism can at best be an unstable, ill-balanced force.

Even for the achievement of a social revolution, nationalism is the indispensable spring-board. The nascent nationalism of the countries of Asia and Africa seeks inevitably to link itself with social revolution.

The social revolution of the countries of South-Eastern Europe failed because it did not ally itself with the nationalism of the peasantry and the middle-classes.

Because it is opposed to world capitalism, that is, economic imperialism, the nationalism of oppressed peoples is ranged against all economic monopolies; it favours the nationalization of all key industries and tends to think in terms of socialization of all economic activity. As a reaction against capitalism, it turns to and embraces Socialism. In opposition to imperialist exploitation of the economic resources of the colonies, it favours economic self-sufficiency as well as the nationalization of all great economic ventures. Thus it has a revolutionary role to play.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL REVOLUTION AND THE INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

Orthodox Marxists maintain that the 'cause of revolutions is the conflict between productive forces and productive relations, as solidified in the political organization of the ruling class.' (*Historical Materialism* by N. Bukharin, p. 248).

If one examines the history of Oriental peoples, one comes to realize that this is only one cause of the revolutions that have been witnessed in the East.

In ancient India, the highest position, social as well as political, was accorded to the Brahmin. Similarly, in China, it was the Mandarin who stood at the top of the social scales. The supremacy of neither was made dependent on economic factors, although they were assured immunity from starvation or penury. In many cases, they even came to possess a good deal of property and to lead luxurious lives. But wealth was not the hallmark either of the Brahmin or the Mandarin. In India rich Vaisyas and powerful Kshatriyas, and in China military chiefs and political leaders occupied a subordinate position. History tells of many a violent and protracted struggle for power between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and our ancient legends chronicle the epic battles between Parasurama and Kartiviryaarjuna. Before the Buddha, Indian society has been fairly stabilized, with the Brahmins and Kshatriyas at the head and with other castes signifying different occupations down the scale.

The whole structure was based on an oligarchic theocracy. In Africa, similarly, there was the witch doctor. He too enjoyed social supremacy totally independent of his economic status.

Despite the Muslim conquest of India, and Muslim rule extending over 600 years in certain parts and over 200 years in others, the supremacy of the Brahmins remained almost untouched. What was this due to ?

(a) The whole people impregnated with the theocratic conception of society.

(b) The idea of divine origin of the scriptures and the social system.

(c) Faith in a 'God-ordained' social dispensation.

(d) The monopoly of social and educational powers and privileges enjoyed by the upper castes: for example, only the 'twice-born' could read the scriptures.

(e) The classification of peoples according to occupations; the planning and apportionment of their remuneration and social status, etc.

It is only with the advent of British rule that the social revolution—that in one form or other had been in progress through the ages—became a stream in full flood.

The Buddha, Basava, Ramanuja, Guru Nanak, Kabir, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sree Narayana Garu of Malabar and others have, down the centuries, carried on a ceaseless struggle against this Brahminical supremacy.

During the last fifty years, several castes like the Jats of the U. P. and the Punjab and Rajastan, the Bhumias of the U. P. and Bihar, the Gonds of the C. P. the Reddis, Kamas and Telagas of Andhra Desa, the Marathas of Maharashtra, the Nadars, Kallars, Maravas and Vellalas of Tamilnad, the Thiyaas of Malabar, the dhobies, barbers, weavers, potters and Viswa Brahmins of the South, and various other peasant, Harijan and working class communities have revolted against a system that would perpetuate their social degradation, *vis-a-vis* the Brahmin.

Their continued social degradation was not the result of any economic weakness. Rich and poor alike among them bore the stigma of 'lowliness'. Even political power did not avail them much. Notwithstanding the fact that many of them had long enjoyed wealth, they could not climb up the social ladder, neither could they rid themselves of their consciousness of inferiority.

From the days of Shivaji Chatrapathi, who, by the way, was put to much trouble to get Brahmins to recognize him as a Kshatriya, there have been either attempts to persuade the Brahmin to concede a higher social status to some particular caste, or to revolt against Brahminical supremacy. The authority of the ancient scripture has been questioned or a new interpretation of their injunctions attempted. In certain areas, the Brahmins have yielded to economic inducement and agreed to confer a higher status on some particular minority community, like the Nattu Kotti Chettis.

More than the change of economic conditions, the influence of Muslim and British rule and more perhaps the challenge of Islam and Christianity have effectively helped in the levelling-up process in Hindu society.

The self-respect movement of 1926-44, the earlier non-Brahmin movement of Andhra Desa and Tamil Nad of 1917-26, and the Bhumias movement of Bihar of 1926-34, attempted to provide the ideological inspiration for this social revolt of the masses.

Where this campaign tried to overthrow the conception of God it failed. The revolt against the ancient scriptures again met with as little success as the earlier struggle led by Basava. But it has generated a new sense of self-respect among vast strata of Hindu society and weakened their faith in scriptural authority.

This social revolution is not ended. An increasing number of castes is coming under its influence. Wealthy

mercantile communities like the Nadars and Nattu Kotti Chettis of the Madras Presidency have at last gained a social status, that their possessions alone could not secure for them for centuries.

When India came in contact with European thought, especially of the era of the French Revolution, with its emphasis on the historical perspective, the flood-gates of social revolt were opened.

The breakdown of the old self-sufficient rural economy has had not a little to do with the initial weakening of Brahmin supremacy.

The Brahmin's newly acquired passion for money and land and his growing alliance with the British services and the Indian capitalists served to open the eyes of the masses to the fact that Brahminism could also function as an instrument of economic exploitation.

It is in the light of this great, continuing revolt that one must view the present-day Gandhian campaign against untouchability, which starts by bestowing on the untouchables a new, more respectable name, Harijans; provides them with education, literary and occupational and with opportunities for self-betterment. The movement seeks at the same time to rid Indians of the error that manual labour is not respectable and particularly the aversion to tanning and scavenging. It aims at promoting the revolutionary spirit among the down-trodden.

We thus see the need for fostering the spirit of revolution and guiding it in the struggle for social freedom. That the objections of the revolutionary movement are not exclusively political, the Indian National Congress has realized. It has been in the van of the struggle to throw open our temples to the Harijans. The temple entry legislation enacted by the enlightened Maharaja of Travancore owes a good deal to the vigorous Congress leadership of the movement.



## CHAPTER IX

### NATIONALISM IS A POSITIVE FORCE

Internationalism is an idea to some extent still beyond the comprehension of the masses.

Indian civilization has, from times immemorial, been based on the conception of the fundamental brotherhood of man. In our daily invocations to God we pray for the happiness and welfare of all—*Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu*. But it is an ideal so lofty that few can translate it into daily life. Small wonder internationalism failed in Soviet Russia after a trial lasting barely twenty-five years. It failed to provide the Russians with adequate inspiration to sustain the war effort. Hence their new passion for nationalism.

Can we use nationalism as an ally to progress ?

Yes.' In Mexico, President Cardenas so used it. A peasant himself, he has helped to awaken the peasants' nationalism and turned it against Anglo-American economic imperialism. He distributed estates among them—both in the shape of small holdings and collective farms. He confiscated the oil-wells held by foreign interests and tried to do away with foreign investments and thus gave a fillip to the peasants' Socialism.

In Argentine, the landlords are in the ascendancy ; yet they are anti-imperialistic. So the Anglo-Americans have had to yield a lot during this war by way of higher prices for their agricultural produce.

Brazil has a Popular Front Government, thoroughly nationalistic and opposed to imperialism.

In China Dr Sun Yat-Sen roused the people against imperialism. Chinese nationalism achieved the abolition of the extra-territorial rights of Western Imperial Powers.

Turkey, Egypt, and Ireland have likewise based their social and political advancement on the bedrock of nationalism.

Nationalism is assuredly a positive force even in politically independent countries.

How shall we integrate nationalism and Socialism?

Not the Nazi way. For that would be to court massacres, exploitation, dictatorship, war-mongering. Let us not forget that Nazism murdered Socialism and that the Communist Party contributed to the destruction of the Social Democrats.

• Not the Japanese way either. That way lies cruelty, imperialism, and the exploitation of weaker peoples. Observe how the Chinese have been massacred by the Japanese imperialists.

Mere nationalism is not enough; neither is Socialism adequate by itself.

True democracy is born of the fusion of nationalism and Socialism, and in all genuine democracies force is taboo.

The highest ideal indeed is to be found in the Gandhian way which harmonizes the ideas and forces of nationalism, Socialism, world-brotherhood, non-violence, and democracy.

The Gandhian way is a vital, growing force; it allows every generation to make its own contribution. It is international in outlook while rooted in nationalism.

Indian, Chinese and other Asiatic peasants first grow nationalistic and anti-imperialistic—then class-conscious.

Western Socialism failed to achieve a proper synthesis with nationalism, because it followed the wrong lead.

Marxism saw only the negative side of nationalism. It failed to understand its positive aspect. It cherished the Utopian dream of internationalism. Marxism needs, therefore, to be corrected in this respect. Because the

Marxist failed to enlist nationalism on his side, Western capitalists succeed in exploiting nationalism, by placing it in juxtaposition with internationalism and Socialism. We must avoid that blunder. We must prevent our capitalists from playing that game.

The nationalism of the colonial and agrarian masses can happily be fused with their anti-imperialism and their urge towards economic betterment to form a mighty socialist force.

## CHAPTER X

### LESSONS OF CHINA

Dr Sun Yat-Sen's three principles—nationalism, anti-imperialism (democracy), and livelihood—have come to be accepted as the credo of Chinese nationalism and Socialism.

He kept all groups united in allegiance to the Kuomintang. But after his death, there broke out a bitter rivalry between Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei.

That was the opportunity for the Communists. For a time they played Wang against Chiang. That caused woeful disruption in the ranks of Chinese nationalists. The rival groups, however, saw through the game and repaired the breach. The result was the expulsion of the Communist Party from the Kuomintang, and the persecution of Chinese Communists.

Madame Sun and Wang Ching-wei then rebelled against Chiang. The Communist Party claimed to work for the masses and paraded their pro-peasant leanings. So did Chiang, through his New Life Movement.

The Communists complained that Chiang's politics were pro-imperialist. Chiang retorted that he was loyal to Dr Sun's doctrine of anti-imperialism and demanded the abolition of extra-territorial rights.

Next, the Communists accused Chiang of pro-capitalist sympathies. Chiang pleaded the need for a united national front. The former advanced Russia's example as an inspiration to the masses; Chiang countered by reaffirming his faith in Chinese village economy, with its cottage industries and its conception of self-sufficiency, and in China's ancient traditions and culture. His New Life Movement, he declared, demonstrated his loyalty to Sun's Socialism.

The Communist Party claimed to be more nationalistic than Chiang ; he retorted by accusing them of slavish allegiance to Russia and the Comintern. The Communists pointed with pride to the achievements of Lenin and Stalin ; Chiang spoke of his loyalty to Sun's principles and of the achievements of the national armies of a China slowly labouring towards unity.

In the Chinese Communist Party there was earlier a struggle between those who put their faith in the proletariat and the cities on the one side, and those who laid greater store by the village and the peasants, on the other. Chen, the leader of the former group triumphed over the leader of the latter, Mao Tse, in the first round. (*Red Star Over China* by Edgar Snow).

Mao Tse retired to his province, worked among the peasantry, organized an army, defeated the local war lords and bandits, established peace in the countryside, dispossessed the big landlords, distributed their lands among the peasants, cancelled agricultural debts, lowered the taxes, abolished all illegal exactions, and won the peasants over to his side. This signal triumph brought the entire Communist Party into his fold.

Chiang saw red in this Red China. He made up his mind to crush it. A Red China, he felt, would always be a fifth-column or a projection of Soviet Russia.

The longest frontier between any two States is that between China and Russia, and a Red China is a perpetual invitation to political and military intervention on the part of Russia. Chiang, therefore, sought financial help from Japan, the U.S.A. and England, and turned against the Reds. He defeated them decisively. The massacre of Nanking was one grim episode of this fratricidal war. The Reds, driven from their provinces, marched heroically over 1,500 miles to the North and settled in territory bordering on a friendly Russia.

The Reds failed because Chiang had the support of the nationalist masses. Mao Tse and his followers established themselves in the northern provinces, infertile, backward and sparsely populated. Here they began to build afresh, winning the support of the peasantry by virtue of their peasant programme. They recruited their armies and leaders from among the peasants, showed Chiang up as a pro-imperialist, developed methods of mass education, established local peace, rid the country of bandits and corrupt officials, and pursued a policy far removed from traditional Communist doctrines.

- Chiang in consequence began to lose ground rapidly. Yet he was too powerful to be easily overthrown. Not only did he command a superior army, but also made a greater appeal to the nationalist sentiment of the people who had suspicions about the Communists' nationalism.

Japan, meanwhile, was set on the path of expansion and aggression. The Anti-Comintern Pact was a good screen for her imperialism. The Anglo-Americans indeed seemed to be partial towards her ambitions.

The loss of Manchuria to Japan, the Western Powers' condonation of Tokio's designs and Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations created a growing anti-Nipponese sentiment in China.

This gave the Reds a good opportunity to appear in the rôle of patriots and urge Chiang to break with Japan, offering their co-operation in such an event. The brief episode of Chiang's melodramatic imprisonment followed; then came the agreement between him and the Reds and the establishment of the united front against the Japs.

- The Communists were compelled to accept Chiang's national leadership because he stood out prominent among the nation's great personalities.

The slogans of the Chinese Reds were inspiring enough :

- (i) The abolition of landlordism and money-lending.
- (ii) Lower taxes.
- (iii) The elimination of civil war, banditry and corrupt officialdom.
- (iv) Opposition to imperialism, demand for equal treaties, national unity (after its own lights).
- (v) The prosecution of the struggle against the Japanese.
- (vi) Encouragement of indigenous goods (Swadeshi).

But, while they proved adequate for the purpose of local peasant revolutions under the leadership of the Communists they were inadequate as battle-cries in any sustained campaign against the Generalissimo. The Reds, therefore, had to knuckle under. But has the united front been a success? The rival groups were united—but in name only. They eyed each other with jealousy and suspicion. The Reds obtained certain supplies from Russia and certain others by raids on Jap-held territory ; but none went to Chiang's armies.

Generalissimo Chiang secured a thin stream of Anglo-American supplies, but would not divert any to the Reds. Red Armies—the 8th Route Army, for example—fought on their own from bases in their own northern provinces, regardless of Chiang's orders.

Chiang therefore ordered their dissolution only to meet with defiance. There was only an armed neutrality between them. Notwithstanding the presence of the Jap aggressor on China's soil, five hundred thousand Chinese soldiers on either side were immobilized on the frontier—uneasily watching for any encroachment and not infrequently engaging in wasteful border skirmishes. It was an unstable alliance and never allowed a united offensive against the Japs.

Thus during the most agonizing period in China's history, her unity was at best precarious. There is now

the danger of the Red Provinces claiming the right of self-determination.

It is true that Chinese Reds have used the peasants for obtaining power in local areas. But their leadership has not been consciously peasant-minded, it has inclined towards the Soviet. The Chinese Communists claim to be acting in the name of a proletariat which hardly existed in any measurable strength, much of it having been in the coastal towns lost to the Japanese.

Though triumphant in two or three provinces, the Reds could not win over the rest of China. Red China was pitted against Chinese nationalism, and both peasants and nationalists lost much thanks to the sectarianism and anti-nationalism of the Communist Party.

### LESSONS

- (i) The Communists Party in China as in all other countries in the world, has discovered that the peasants can be and are revolutionary; can throw up their own leadership, intellectual and military, can wage a revolutionary struggle with unflagging zeal and unshakable moral for more than a decade.
- (ii) The Chinese Reds have, however, not yet discovered the role and significance of the peasants in the world revolution.
- (iii) The Communist Party has worked only as a disruptive, sectarian force; bent upon its own dictatorship, unwilling to subordinate party ambitions to national duty even in the most acute national crisis.

The world awaits with the keenest interest the outcome of the latest Chiang—Mao talks to forge unity in a victorious China. With the signing of the



Sino-Soviet treaty in August, 1945, Moscow appears to have recognized Chiang's regime as the National Government of China. Russia's attitude towards the Communists, however, has not been clearly defined.

- (iv) The Communist Party wishes to win territory by piecemeal acquisitions, and demands the application of the principle of self-determination at the end of the war.
- (v) National revolution on the one side, unity and leadership and the Communist Party on the other are incompatible; either the one or the other must triumph.
- (vi) No party can work hand in hand with the Communists save at grave danger to its life, progress and fulfilment of its purpose, particularly as the Reds look up to Russia for moral, material and diplomatic and military assistance for bolstering up their local ambitions and schemes, and their rebellions.

Is the Chinese Communist Party a proletarian party? Even Edgar Snow does not argue that it is. (See his chapter 'How Red are the Reds' in *Scorched Earth*).

It is peasant-minded in its policies today. It is also peasant-conscious in its contacts. But it is anti-peasant in its tendency and momentum. It is to some extent nationalistic. But it owes complete allegiance to Soviet ideals and to Moscow. It is not fully peasant-minded. Its ambition is to play the role of a proletarian party. Hence it is a danger to Chinese nationalism.

Yet, its non-proletarian, pro-nationalist development has brought Mao Tse into conflict with the Comintern. Thrice he was subjected to disciplinary measures. But because he wielded strong influence among the Chinese masses and the Chinese Red Armies, he could not be destroyed.

The Chinese Communist Party is both a beacon and a warning. It has proved that the peasants can be, and are, an effective, adequate revolutionary vanguard. It has also proved to be a disruptive influence in Chinese nationalism and leadership.

The Chinese Reds have not yet developed any independent colonial or peasant-conscious ideology. They have so far failed to go beyond the 'anti-zemindar' and 'anti-sahukar' slogans. It is doubtful whether they understand the slogan of the Kisan-Mazdoor Raj.

The idea of the modern peasant, as a world entity, with his part in world markets, his responsibilities and disabilities in world capitalism, and with his conscious or unconscious part in the world revolution to end the dictatorship of capitalism is beyond the understanding of the Chinese Reds.

Why have they failed to develop an independent ideology, as distinguished from that of the Comintern?

Because they were not bold enough to think independently. They were too much under the intellectual tutelage of the Comintern.

Gandhiji alone has made bold to go ahead with independent and constructive thought. Dr Sun and Marshal Chiang too have made similar attempts.

The Chinese Reds have disrupted the national unity so assiduously built up by Sun, Wang and Chiang. Sun and Wang and Chiang stood for the same programme of rural reconstruction that the Reds claimed to have been working for. Why then did the latter act as an independent force?

- Only for political leadership; not for the peasant or proletarian revolution. They were not like Chiang under the influence of the capitalists, it is true. But the world has to guard against national disruption of the type that Communists attempt to bring about in all countries.

That the Communists cannot be relied upon to stick to an agreement is proved by their behaviour since the pact with Chiang.

That the Communist Party in brushing up its own power, schemes constantly to weaken all rival parties is also proved by its constant intrigues against Chiang; its refusal to co-operate with nationalist China and its ceaseless attempts to gain supremacy in all re-occupied areas, and in zones liberated from the Japanese and by carrying on partisan warfare.

It seeks also to be a law unto itself and, while demanding respect for democratic principles from Chiang, imposes its own dictatorial regime on all re-occupied areas without consulting the wishes of the local peoples.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF PEASANTS' CHALLENGE TO WORLD CAPITALISM

From earliest times human ingenuity has been directed towards devising tools or machines to lighten manual labour. From simple tools to the huge complicated power-driven machinery of the present day, the transition has been rapid. But mechanization has not spread to all employments.

• Agriculture, domestic service, shop-keeping, office-management, cookery and other similar employments are not suitable for the utilization of machinery in the same degree as the textile or steel or chemical industries, for example. Yet, people who work in mechanized industries as well as those who work in jobs that do not admit the extensive use of labour-saving machinery have equal rights to a share of the world's wealth. Both have equal claims on at least the minimum necessary for decent living.

But the present economic set up is all topsy-turvy. Those countries which concentrate most on mechanized industry and associated commerce are trying to monopolize all the benefits of such manufacture and trade and are enabled by the present dispensation to keep for themselves most of the wealth thus produced. And countries obliged to concentrate their major resources upon agriculture, cottage industries, etc. because of their large populations, political subjection and historical and economic disabilities have to be content with very much less even than what they are able to produce by their efforts and yield a very great portion of the wealth they create to industrial nations.

In fact they are despoiled of a good proportion of what they produce by the industrial countries through the

mechanism of world markets and the iniquitous system of exchanges created by such world markets.

Even ignoring for the time being the capitalist exploitation of agricultural countries by industrial powers, the present social order whereby all benefits accruing from the unrestricted use of machinery, and power and industrial and commercial organization are monopolized by countries and the particular classes connected with such enterprise is clearly unfair.

Hence, the need for the world to adopt more equitable standards for the distribution of the advantages to be derived from the industrial, commercial and agricultural organization of the world among the peoples of different countries and also among the different classes of producers within a given country.

At the same time, so long as the peasants and the votaries of cottage industries and domestic services etc. claim to be treated on a par with the proletariat of industrialized countries, they too must be ready to adopt such minimum standards of scientific application of their labour and other resources as is compatible with their employment and their social and economic organizational opportunities.

It is true that the colonial countries are richer in man-power, while the industrial countries are richer in mechanical and commercial organization. Yet, human labour is as much an asset as mineral resources or mechanical power. Where the population is dense, therefore, the use of mechanical appliances and power may have to be limited. Yet, if the whole of humanity is treated as one community, then people deserve as much consideration, as large a share of the world's wealth as others who inhabit more thinly populated but mechanically more advanced countries.

For instance in England, and the U. S. A., it is not only the industrial workers and their technicians and organizers of the enormous production possible through the mechanization, even the simple old fashioned agriculturist derives a portion of such benefit. Compared with the utter poverty and misery of the colonial and coloured peasants the Anglo-American peasants' lot may be said to be enviable, though they in turn are deplorably poor compared with their own industrial and commercial classes. Similarly the Anglo-American commercial and professional classes are very much far better off than the corresponding classes in less industrialized countries.

Yet, in England or America no one argues that the non-industrial sections ought to be paid less and allowed a smaller share of the national wealth, just because they do not employ machinery or power in their every-day avocations.

On the contrary, in America, for example, the non-mechanized commercial professions afford much higher salaries than industrial activities.

Therefore, the world has had to admit in practice (though only partly and only in certain countries) that people employed in non-mechanized industries and employments have a right to a portion of the wealth accruing to those engaged in mechanized industries and occupations.

This principle must be consciously and scrupulously extended to the whole world. Only then can a beginning be made in eliminating the present unjust exploitation of agricultural peoples and countries by capitalist countries.

True, it may be very long before the world comes to recognize these duties it owes to humanity.

But it is necessary for the world's toilers to recognize the validity of this principle and the iniquity of the present social anarchy.

Once the world's toiling masses realize and recognize this grave injustice done to them and the urgent need for setting aright the present social dispensation, a cataclysmic revolutionary movement will have been set afoot.

And the principal motive power of such a revolution would be provided by the world's peasantry, who are the worst sufferers from the present unjust dispensation.

The very first move in the right direction would be for the world to recognize the right of all peasants, industrial workers and other toilers to more or less equal treatment and remuneration and social services, irrespective of the conditions of their material equipment.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE GREATEST INIQUITY AND SORE IN MODERN SOCIETY

The inequality of wealth between the peasant and capitalist classes is the most glaring phenomenon of modern times.

The secret of the success of the industrial system lies in the exploitation of the peasant. This is best illustrated in the 1929-35 depression in the U.S.A. To promote recovery, markets were needed for industrial goods. For that, consumers were needed but most of them were farmers and the farmers were bankrupt. How enable them to buy? Not by lending money for them to buy industrial goods with—that was not possible as a permanent remedy. So their purchasing capacity had to be raised. This could be done by making people to pay higher prices for the farmers' produce and thus placing greater funds in their hands, expecting them to purchase manufactured goods.

Machine production yields colossal results, in return for the slightest application of man-power. Hitherto only the industrial classes have monopolized all the advantage of such production. The last economic depression showed that this could continue no longer, that a portion of that advantage had to be shared with the peasantry.

It also proved that if peasants are exploited beyond a certain point, their economy collapses and they go bankrupt, banks fail, and that leads to acute economic depressions.

Thus, contrary to the teachings of economists and the assumptions of orthodox Socialists, economic depressions are caused not so much by any monetary exchange or tariff, maladjustments and industrial unemployment,



over-production and industrial crises, as by the over-exploitation of the peasantry and the proletariat, leading to a weakening of their effective consuming capacity.

President Roosevelt's New Deal raised agrarian prices by 25 per cent by :

- (a) prescribing minimum prices for agricultural produce ;
- (b) limitation of the area under agriculture ;
- (c) compensation for peasants who thus reduced area under cultivation ;
- (d) and by raising tariffs on agrarian imports etc.

Who paid for this ? The industrial and commercial classes. And for a good reason, as otherwise, their industrial and commercial mechanism would stop functioning.

These higher prices are paid out of the enormous fund of social wealth yielded by the industrial system. The internal economy of the U. S. A. withstood this new adjustment and redistribution of wealth because nearly 50 per cent of the population was engaged in industrial and commercial activities.

To a far-sighted statesman like Morgenthau of the U. S. Treasury, it is clear that in the long run either prosperity or poverty, is indivisible and that no one section of humanity can be permanently prosperous, while another is extremely poor ; that is, so long as world markets and communications prevail.

The inequality of incomes and wealth between the peasantry on the one side and industrial and commercial classes on the other is the biggest injustice prevailing in the world.

It is the Eastern Socialists and Mahatma Gandhi who have recognized this as a greater malady even than the inequality of wealth between employer and employee in the industrial structure.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EVOLUTION OF UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORLD'S WEALTH BETWEEN PEASANTS AND OTHERS

In the olden days villages enjoyed self-sufficiency. Barter between more or less self-sufficient communities slowly came into being. With the growth of towns there emerged the merchant, for the town needed trade with the villages.

Towns strove to drive hard bargains with the villages; their merchants wanted cheap food supplies. The peasant was satisfied with 'courtesy prices', that is, nominal prices for his produce and hardly cared to obtain full value for it. Urban folk extracted as much as they possibly could for their goods. Thus there were unequal bargains which gradually came to be stabilized as traditional prices.

The merchant, supposed to be only the middle-man, an impartial agent, was in fact, both by virtue of his upbringing and personal interests the agent of the urban producer; he acted against the peasants' interests. Both merchants and manufacturers specialized in marketing and manipulated transactions to serve their own interests at the expense of the peasants. Unequal exchanges were thus perpetuated.

The conspiracy of all non-agricultural forces against the peasant derives from the fact that they are so vitally dependent upon the supply of agricultural produce, especially cereals and raw materials for manufactures.

Witness for example, the one-sided price-controls and compulsory grain-requisitioning imposed on the Indian peasantry during the war even while the industrial and urban classes were being pampered and the

needs of the peasant for cheap consumer goods were being starved. As in Soviet Russia in 1920-39, so in war-time India, the countryside was starved in order to feed the towns; peasants persecuted and pauperized in order to help towns and urban people to grow fat and prosperous.

To escape this constant drain, Gandhiji and the All-India Village Industries Association suggest the withdrawal of the peasants from world markets, the development of concentric circles of village, district, provincial and national self-sufficiency, the development of cottage industries through the co-operation of basic industries under State management; equal exchanges, the socialization of all trade and open markets. But modern peasants have been unable to rid themselves of exploitation for a variety of reasons :

- (i) They are still learning the art of looking after their own interests in the complex modern machinery of markets.
- (ii) They are not organized.
- (iii) They are not yet fully conscious of the economic laws that govern their present conditions.
- (iv) They are subject to the law of production under duress and the incidence of the 'law of key services and interest', that is why they must produce in order to pay taxes, rents, and interest on debts, and in order to purchase the necessities of life through cash payments since the ancient economy of self-sufficiency is gone.
- (v) The teaching of modern economics disguised the exploitation of the peasant by talking of their comparative inefficiency.
- (vi) Marxists concentrated mostly on the proletariat and neglected the study of peasant economy.

- (vii) The peasants have not developed as a political force ; they concentrated far too much on such defeatist measures as tariffs.
- (viii) The proletariat has developed the strike as a weapon of offence and defence ; the peasantry has no comparable weapon.

Fortunately, a change is taking place. Both Dr Sun of China and Mahatma Gandhi have investigated the causes of this great inequality of wealth between the world's peasantry and the industrial and commercial classes.

Balkan leaders like Radich and savants like Pribichevich are also coming to grips with this problem.

Today we all realize that there can never be any lasting peace in this world, no real social revolution until these inequalities are abolished and this growing drain of the wealth produced by the peasants into the pockets of urban industrial and commercial classes is stopped. We also realize that this is a world problem. We know that the so-called industrial countries of the West owe their prosperity not to any inherent excellence of their masses but to their ability to impose these unequal exchanges on the agricultural countries of the East.

Unless this great injustice is righted and this social canker removed, there can be no world unity ; there will only be a constant state of war between the West and the East, the white and the coloured races and industrial and agricultural peoples.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LANDLORDISM IS LOSING GROUND; PEASANT ECONOMY IS GAINING STRENGTH

The Linlithgow Commission hoped, though in vain, for the revival of landlordism and plantation economy. On the contrary a peasant and communal economy is gaining ground all over the world, not excluding South-Eastern Europe.

In the South-Eastern European belt, too, peasants rose in revolt against landlordism after the last war. In Rumania, Yugoslavia, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and Bulgaria, large areas of land were nationalized and distributed among the peasants. A considerable revolution was achieved by the peasants themselves.

This they achieved only after making large sacrifices. Thousands of their workers were ruthlessly murdered and scores of their most prominent leaders were executed. Yet they remained loyal to their revolution. Thus, even though the political character of Balkan Governments changed from Socialist to Democratic, and then to Fascist, the results of the rural revolution could not be reversed.

The peasants of most of these countries have developed their own peasant parties to organize their struggle for power. In certain States, particularly in Bulgaria, they actually captured ministerial posts. They could not be defeated by 'democratic' strategy. Only through violence and *bourgeois* counter-revolution, could they be thrown out of power.

Even during this War, despite the anti-peasant propaganda carried on by the Communist parties, the peasant parties refused to knuckle under the Nazis, went underground, swelled the ranks of the partisans and guerillas and kept the anti-Fascist struggle alive. They

stood by their exiled Governments and rushed to join forces with the liberating Allied armies. When new democratic Governments were set up they offered them ready co-operation.

Even in regard to world commerce, they scored notable triumphs; they forced their Governments to put an end to cheap imports of foreign wheat, corn, beef, etc. in order to sustain the minimum prices of their own produce.

Contrary to principles laid down that a peasant economy goes well with co-operation, Denmark, Ireland, the U.S.A., India, Japan, France and Italy have shown that co-operation can be harnessed to a peasant economy. Even as in industry and commerce the peasants of South-Eastern Europe, particularly of Croatia, have been making very earnest and fruitful experiments in co-operative production and marketing. The impoverishment of the peasantry as we have already seen leads to international crises. To avert this calamity, capitalism is obliged to turn to the theory of national self-sufficiency.

The Marxists laid stress on the decreasing purchasing power of the proletariat. More important is the diminution of the purchasing capacity of the peasantry. The U.S.A. realized this during the last depression.

## CHAPTER XV

### INFLUENCES MAKING FOR PEASANT CONSCIOUSNESS

Marx recognized the power of ideas, though he was neither an idealist nor a philosopher. But he himself propounded the erroneous idea that the peasants are forces of the counter-revolution, the only genuine revolutionaries being the proletariat.

Thanks to this, Lenin, the greatest of his disciples, proceeded to insure the Russian Revolution against peasant opposition. He classified the peasants into the rich and the poor and those in between. He considered the poor peasant alone to be revolutionary; he would neutralize the middle-class of peasants and rob them of their traditional and local leadership. Lenin was confident that collectivization would succeed as the Russian peasants were not organized either on a class or national basis.

After the revolution of 1917, the dictatorship of the combined forces of peasants and workers soon degenerated into a dictatorship exclusively of the proletariat. During the Socialist Construction period, again the peasants fared badly; their political rights were ignored and their economic needs dismissed as of no consequence. Thus calamity overtook the Russian peasants, thanks to Marx's teaching.

In India and Latin America, the Communist Party has not succeeded in winning over the peasant because its ideology is based on this mischievous Marxist doctrine.

Marx was persuaded to this way of thinking by the fact that he imagined the world markets exercised no appreciable influence on the peasant. He was much too pre-occupied with the effects of world markets on the

proletariat and Western industrialism. In his time the peasants were just emerging from their economy of village self-sufficiency. He welcomed the change; he desired the rapid merging of the peasantry into the proletariat through commercial agriculture. The natural culmination of such development, he thought would be the eventual elimination of the peasantry—through its metamorphosis into the proletariat.

He felt, however, that peasants would resist that tendency, and work for the counter-revolution. This was a mistake. But could he have avoided it? Marx studied the effects of economic crises, but only in relation to the proletariat. But when Lenin was formulating his principles, the whole world including the agricultural peoples had been brought within the orbit of world markets. Both the peasants and the proletariat had come to be involved in world economic crises. It was open to him to study the effects of world markets on the peasants, but he failed to do so—which was indeed a pity. The peasant movement has made rapid progress since.

The peasants, more than industrial workers, enjoy certain advantages in developing their organizations :

- (a) They are still near to their village traditions of self-government.
- (b) They are more self-reliant.
- (c) They have more self-confidence, being in charge of food production.
- (d) The Red Indians and Negroes, for example, are even today self-governing in their communes and do not recognize any master; Indian peasants to this day settle their social affairs through their local caste or group Panchayats.

The peasants, therefore, are capable of playing as effective a role in the revolutionary struggle as the prole-



tariat. Only they must be provided with a central organization, leadership and an inspiring ideology.

‘Because the peasant in most cases cultivates only one crop, the great monopolies are able to fix prices on a particularly low level, while they see to it that the goods sent to the colonies are sold at particularly high prices and thus monopoly capital is able to squeeze some profit over and above the average profit from the colonies, that is “super profit”.’ (Ralph Fox’s *Communism*, p. 68).

The crisis of 1929-35 opened the peasant’s eyes to the significance and disruptive influence of new forces. The peasants had been accustomed to natural calamities like floods, cyclones and the failure of rains; but now, their very solvency was being threatened by economic depression notwithstanding the fact that they were working harder and producing more. It made them think furiously.

Hence the peasant movements of the U.S.A. and India. Moratoria, tariff protection, revision of the traditional practice of imprisonment for civil debts, etc. are some of their new slogans.

They have begun to think along new lines about the new world economic forces that confront them. They are abandoning the time-worn idea that debts must be repaid in full through successive generations lest the original debtor languish in purgatory.

Besides all this nationalism too has awakened the peasants and is persuading them to think in terms of the nation. The rapid progress of the Indian peasant movement since 1920 and of the Chinese movement since 1923 owes not a little to the leverage provided by nationalism.

In 1920, Gandhiji provided the new alchemy, the spirit of defiance against the British Government. (See Pandit Nehru’s *Autobiography*).

This new spirit of defiance spread throughout India’s 700,000 villages. It was nectar to parched-up hearts.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PEASANTS THE GREATEST REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD

Marx thought the peasants were anti-revolutionary. Lenin and Stalin accepted the thesis in their approach to the peasants. Gandhiji alone among the world's great revolutionaries recognized the revolutionary potentialities of the peasant and provided him with the weapon of Satyagraha.

There are approximately 120 crores of peasants in the world and not more than 40 crores of commercial and industrial workers. The problem of the peasants is therefore one of colossal proportions both in significance and magnitude.

It can be solved only through the collapse of capitalism. Here Indian nationalism has played a notable part by awakening the peasants and training them in the technique of political revolution. Peasants too responded marvellously to its call and training.

The latest phase of the national struggle was stupendous and evoked a striking response from the peasant masses. Everywhere they demonstrated how great a revolutionary force they could be.

The Chinese peasant movement too is only 20 years old. But unhappily it could not develop a truly peasant programme. It has come to be dominated by the Communists, who have little faith in the peasants' capacity to play the role of revolutionary vanguard.

The Croatian and Bulgarian peasant parties have had a glorious career of struggle and sacrifice and they have created a great sense of class-consciousness among the peasant, thanks to the limitless suffering borne by such heroic leaders as Stamboliski and the Radich brothers.

But they have failed to develop scientific ideology for the peasants nor have they been able to visualize the role that the peasants can play in the unfolding world revolution.

It is now possible, thanks to Gandhiji's inspiration and the research carried out by the Indian peasant movement, to provide the world peasantry with an independent revolutionary ideology.

The peasants are on the revolutionary march. Mahatma Gandhi has welcomed this. Whoever fails to recognize these obvious facts and, parrotlike, repeats Marx's eighty-year-old prejudices hardly deserves to be called a revolutionary as he opposes the deductions of scientific Socialism.

The strongest economic factor in the world today is that the United States, which clung so tenaciously to her protectionist tariff policy right up to 1939, poses today as a great advocate of world economic unity and free international trade. Her present role is similar to that of England in the last century. But she is thinking only of her own interests.

She tries to impose this policy upon the rest of the world, however, through the fourth clause of the Atlantic Charter. Agricultural and backward countries cannot accept this. They have to safe-guard the interests of their own peasantry. The main weapons with which the peasants can hope to force industrial countries and peoples to yield more reasonable prices for their produce are the grain strike, an economy of self-sufficiency and international commodity controls.

More and more peasants in the Latin American, Balkan and Asiatic countries are coming to recognize the need for developing these weapons in order to protect themselves against capitalist exploitation.

As their class consciousness and organization develop and as they learn to play their part in politics more dexterously, they will be increasingly successful in their efforts to break the iron ring of world markets and unequal exchanges.

## CHAPTER XVII

### HOW PEASANTS HAVE BROKEN THE IRON RING OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND WORLD TRADE

It is gradually being realized that world crises are brought on by the fact that 120 crores of peasants are so impoverished that they cannot purchase the manufactured goods with which the world's markets are flooded.

This vicious system which keeps the peasants depressed has to be broken. This discovery was made strangely enough by the late President Roosevelt. He, it was, who realized that unless the purchasing power of the peasants was developed, there could be no industrial recovery. In the U. S. A. there were 10 million unemployed workers, and 60 to 70 million impoverished peasants during the depression. Unless the 70 millions were once again enabled to purchase industrial goods, there could be no trade recovery. So capitalism in order to save itself from insolvency, had to bend before the peasants.

The New Deal measures tended to weaken international trade and to force the commercial and industrial classes to part with a portion of the booty that was being extracted from the peasants. This was how it was done :

(a) Agricultural prices were raised by 25 per cent through a limitation of the area under cultivation ;

(b) Payment of compensation to peasants who reduced acreage ;

(c) Raising funds through a processing tax on produce sold in order to raise its price ;

(d) Preventing the flow of imports by means of tariffs ;

(e) Building up storage for surplus produce ;

(f) Compelling consumers to pay higher prices.

The peasants were able to bring capitalism to its knees by refusing to repay debts, by refusing to allow their lands to be sold, by refusing to supply milk etc. to cities, by refusing to produce other essential commodities and also by using the vote to strengthen Roosevelt's New Deal.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN REVOLUTIONARY PEASANT

Modern peasantry is as much the product of capitalism as the proletariat.

Engels said : ' The spinning wheel, the hand-loom and the blacksmith's hammer were replaced by the spinning machine, the mechanical loom and the steam-hammer : and the factory, making the co-operation of hundreds and thousands of workers necessary, took the place of the individual work-room.' (*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, p. 31)

But neither he nor Marx, nor even Lenin, has told us what happened to the peasantry while capitalism was making giant strides. They confidently expected the peasants to be converted into a landless agrarian and industrial proletariat by the advance of capitalism. But that did not happen even in Europe, where large-scale capitalist agricultural economy failed in competition with the peasant economy.

In the East, too, it has failed. The peasant economy has steadily gained strength with the slow liquidation of landlords and the abrogation of their feudal rights.

It is true that in some parts of the world capitalists have dispossessed the peasants of their lands through iniquitous laws, through violence and through purchasing in satisfaction of debts. But it is not much that they have gained.

Capitalism has helped too towards the emancipation of the peasantry from feudal hegemony, village self-sufficiency, barter economy and rigid local planning. For Capitalism needed larger and ever larger quantities of agricultural produce raised from areas most suitable for

exploitation. For instance, take the special privileges and inducements offered to Indian peasants to make them give up food crops and raise tobacco. Force too was used, as in the case of indigo production in Champaran, Bihar. Something very similar happened in the Congo, Latin America, Kenya, the Gold Coast, Malaya, Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies.

The peasants began to respond to the world markets and the money economy set up by capitalism, as they were assured of regular supplies of food, clothing, etc. from abroad, thanks to modern communications. Hence Berhal concentrates on jute, the Central Provinces on cotton and oil seeds, Guntur on tobacco, Bihar and the U. P. on sugar-cane etc. The peasants are now wide-awake, commercial-minded and world-conscious.

From serfs and slaves and tenants-at-will, from members of village communities or tribal organizations and from mere indentured labourers on plantations, the peasants are slowly becoming a modern independent, cash-minded market-conscious class.

Capitalism has thus to some extent been a progressive force in the politics of world peasantry inasmuch as it has helped them to become independent of landlordism, to reach world markets and to share albeit only a meagre portion of the world's increasing wealth.

But it has also very often deprived large masses of peasants of their lands, strengthened their feudal overlords, introduced a new capitalist landlordism, and even absentee-landlordism with its evil corollary of rack-renting.

- To that extent, it has been a reactionary and retrograde influence.

In another sphere, that of capitalist agricultural economy, it has failed before the persistent obstruction of the peasants.



Capitalism has therefore had to reconcile itself to a peasant economy.

Thus, there are today 120 crores of peasants in the world and they are not being liquidated. Many of them are landless, but, the process of granting their holdings from out of estates and unoccupied State lands is in operation. The diminution of holdings is being arrested through consolidation through the establishment of family estates, which are declared inalienable, so that generations of peasants are ensured full employment.

The peasants have emerged as a class with world needs and responsibilities.

The last great war, the economic depression of 1929-35 and the present war brought them face to face with the prospect of total destruction of their much prized peasant economy.

The rigorous dictatorship of capitalism, its wastage and its utter inability to help itself and its satellites—all features of the present evil dispensation—have become evident even to the peasants. The recent economic crises have opened the eyes of the peasants, making them class-conscious, forcing them to seek ways and means of destroying the many tentacles of world capitalism.

Hence, their offensive against international trade, plantation economy and commercial crops, their new passion for self-sufficiency and for home and village and national planning.

Mahatma Gandhi grasped this and devised his solution based on the philosophy of the village movement—the All-India Village Industries' Association and the All-India Spinners' Association—with the emphasis on rural education and rural planning.

Unlike Marx, Lenin and Stalin, Indian leaders realize the significance of the peasantry, because we are fundamentally an agricultural people. We suffer from world

capitalism, not so much through the exploitation of the proletariat as through the exploitation of the peasantry. Marx, Lenin, and Stalin have realized that capitalism would fail because of its own internal contradictions and the constant struggle with its natural enemies, who stand for progressive forces and purposes. We agree. But we differ from them in that we believe that the peasants and proletariat are equally the enemies and potential successors of capitalism.

Now that the peasants feel compelled to fight capitalism for supremacy, there is no escape for capitalism ; it can no longer hope to appease industrial labour ; it will have to wage a losing battle.

While the proletariat fights for more concessions, larger wages, etc., the peasantry wages a ceaseless battle for higher prices, wages, etc.

Pressed between these two claws of the pincers, capitalism has either to break loose or be broken. Marx visualized rightly that it would be broken. Gandhiji says it will either liquidate itself or be liquidated. Both are right.

When capitalism goes, there will appear on the world stage, a victorious peasantry and proletariat. But they need the co-operation of the Praja or the technicians, white-collar workers and intellectuals. They too are revolutionary ; they will join the revolution if only they are assured the power, honour and comradeship befitting their contribution to society. But Marx and Lenin did not take these classes into consideration. The sufferings of the Russian Soviets during 1917-37 may be traced to the fact that the Praja were not recognized and were sought to be liquidated, even as the peasantry was sought to be subverted. While after 1937 the Praja have been allowed to come into their own, the peasants have not yet been accorded their legitimate place in Russian social economy.

That accounts for the peasants' hostility towards the Soviets. They would not tolerate the dictatorship of any one class, like the proletariat.

## CHAPTER XIX

### WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT DECIDE THE CHARACTER OF DISTRI- BUTION OF WEALTH IN SOCIETY?

Marx said that the distribution of the means of production settles the character of the distribution of social wealth. This can apply only to capitalist-cum-industrial economy, in which the industrialists are in possession of the factors of production. What happens then to the peasants and artisans who own their instruments of production and yet have no control over the distribution of the wealth they produce? Marx did not give any detailed answer to this question; he merely asserted they would all soon be liquidated; for he considered them 'intermediate forms'.

Whoever controls finance capital, the exchange, the industrial mechanism and world markets, decides also the nature of the distribution of world's wealth. In Marx's time, industrial capital had gained supremacy over commercial capital. Hence, his special emphasis on industrialists and their control of the means of production.

By Lenin's time, finance capital had gained supremacy over industrial and commercial capital. So he laid stress on the role of finance capital and imperialism.

In the light of the combined role of industrial, commercial, and finance capital and their modern by-product, imperialism—both political and economic—we are now able further to extend the ideas of Marx on the motive force deciding the nature of distribution in modern society. We therefore realize the comparative unimportance of the ownership of the factors and instruments of production, and the vital importance of the owners and

wielders of the modern weapons of capitalism—finance capital, world markets and imperialism.

Thanks to two world wars, colonial nationalism, the Gandhian way and the Kisan movement, the peasant can no longer be suppressed or sent back to his ancient political somnolence.

Capitalism will soon be overthrown. Gandhiji has laid down the basic idealism of the peasants' revolution. The superstructure has been worked at by J. C. Kuma-rappa and the author.

## CHAPTER XX

### ALIGNMENT OF MODERN CLASSES

The proletariat are, by virtue of their class interests ranged against the employers and the commercial classes. The peasants are ranged against the industrial and commercial classes. The industrial classes comprise the proletariat as well as the employers. The surplus wealth produced and accumulated by the peasants is extracted by merchants and the industrial and professional classes.

These industrial classes include the proletariat also. So directly and indirectly (indirectly in the main perhaps), even the proletariat come to share in the booty extracted from the peasants by capitalism.

It is not impossible for world capitalism to appease the proletariat, as long as there are peasants anywhere in the world to be exploited.

For example, the British, French, German and American proletariat are being granted higher wages and many social services at the expense of the agricultural masses of the colonies and the rest of the world.

It is so even in the U.S.A. For the ultimate alignment of forces capitalism may have to ally itself with the proletariat and the commercial and professional classes.

• Who are the enemies of capitalism ?

The peasantry and the proletariat—the former in larger degree than the latter ; the one indirectly, the other directly ; the one through the world markets, the other through the employment (labour) market.

• Both peasants and proletariat gain by co-operating with each other for both have to fight against common enemies—the industrial, commercial and professional classes. Alone, the proletariat cannot succeed ; neither can the peasantry. Together they can triumph.

It may be asked : Supposing the peasants are assured of a low tax burden, freedom from landlordism and a share in political power, a decent price level and a share in the total surplus value accumulated by them, can they be fully or to a considerable extent, appeased ?

Similarly it may be asked : Is it possible to appease the proletariat by the offer of minimum wages, etc. ?

Our answer to both questions would be : No. For their demand for complete political power, complete mastery over surplus value and for the ending of all exploitation, could never be fully met.

Moreover the peasantry have an additional motivating force that would help their revolutionary fervour alive—the hunger of the landless. They would continue to press their demands. To satisfy them, the landed peasant would have to seek for a greater share in the world income, as otherwise, he would have to forego an increasing share of his already inadequate income.

This common search, this common urge towards improvement would compel both the landed and the landless peasant increasingly to realize how they are being defrauded by capitalism. Hence the rising tempo of the revolutionary drive against capitalism.

Marx said that the proletarian revolution would be the revolution of the overwhelming majority.

But the proletariat do not constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of any country.

‘All previous historical movements were movements of minorities or in the interest of minorities ; but the proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority.’ (Marx : *Communist Manifesto*, p. 17)

Marx imagined that all other sections of the people would come to be merged in the proletariat. But that did not happen. On the contrary, a new class emerged —

the middle class, or the intellectuals or professionals. And yet another and bigger class has now entered the lists—the modern peasantry.

Marx said that all non-proletarian classes, the peasants, middlemen, etc. for example were reactionary. (p. 16)

Yet in the Paris Commune of 1870, he sought the co-operation of the peasants and the middle classes. Why? They were powerful; so he welcomed their co-operation. But the Commune failed to win them over, because the socialist ideology and programme had nothing to inspire them.

Lenin devised the formula for splitting up the peasantry into the poor, middling and rich. The poor peasants were to be won over, the middling to be neutralized and the rich to be fought against.

Trotsky thought the peasants were counter-revolutionary, and, therefore, to be suppressed.

Lenin felt that the peasants might oppose collectivization. But he believed that he could score a triumph against them by robbing them of their leadership, breaking up their organization, preventing the development of a nation-wide peasant consciousness, (witness his talk with Wells) and also by banning peasant union.

What were the consequences of that policy?

- (i) A nation-wide struggle between the peasants and Government.

- (ii) Sabotage and non-co-operation from the peasants.

- (iii) A food famine among vast masses of people who endured untold suffering. Government ultimately triumphed, it is true, because the peasants had no political power, the proletariat exercising dictatorship and because the proletariat goaded by hunger and with the State backing them up proved too strong for the peasants.



But the catastrophe that befell Russia then can be averted elsewhere. Stalin maintained that the peasants could be socialistic. So he would not agree to the Trotskyist military levies and militarization and collectivization of agriculture by compulsion.

But the Communist Party went ahead impetuously. The result was a second famine loomed on the economic horizon. Peasant opposition grew—sabotage broke out—again. Stalin beat a retreat, and formulated a new slogan.

In contrast to all this Gandhiji has proved, through his political practice, that the peasants are really an effective revolutionary force. The Indian peasant movement has shown the way for peasants to develop their own leadership.

Bukharin defines a class in his *Historical Materialism* as 'the aggregate of persons playing their part in production, standing in the same relation towards other persons in the production process' (p. 275). They are 'united not only by common and uniform interests, but also by the opposition of their interests to those of other classes' (p. 277). And peasants are certainly a class, in the light of this definition.

It is true that there are many sections among peasants with different and sometimes conflicting interests. But, like the proletariat, the peasants too must stand together.

What Marx said of combination among the proletariat applies with equal force to the peasantry: 'Combination has always a double end, that of eliminating competition among themselves while enabling them to make general competition against the capitalist.' (Quoted by Bukharin in *Historical Materialism*, p. 293).

A united front is needed as much among the peasants as among the proletariat. To split them is the aim of capitalists and zemindars. To unite them must be ours.

All peasants, irrespective of their economic and social gradations, have the same goal—the overthrow of world capitalism; the same disability—unequal exchanges with capitalists; the same enemies—the merchants and the industrial and commercial classes; and the same aim—to abolish the present inequalities, to gain power over the State and to reach parity with the toilers of the world.

Marx is definitely wrong in assuming that the peasants have got to be liquidated. Far from sinking into degradation they are today gaining a higher status and greater rights.

Big estates are being liquidated or partitioned and the lands distributed among the peasants.

In Latin America, Asia and Africa the plantation method has failed and small holdings are coming into vogue; Tribal communism still holds sway. More and more peasants are securing land. Absentee landlordism, though it may be on the increase in a few countries, is being undermined and liquidated. Collective cultivation is reconcilable with the existence of the peasants as a class; it has nothing to do with the large-scale aggregation of landlordism envisaged by Marx.

The peasantry would conduct its struggle by developing national self-sufficiency schemes; by imposing minimum prices for different crops; by crop planning and crop restriction on a world basis where necessary.

Bukharin prescribed the following conditions for a class to be accepted as revolutionary: (1) It must be 'economically exploited and politically oppressed in a capitalist society'. (2) It must be a poor class. (3) It must be a producing class. (4) It must not be bound by private property. (5) It must be held together by common conditions of existence and labour, its members working side by side. He admitted that the peasantry possesses all but the last two qualifications. But he failed

to distinguish between private and personal property, and did not realize that an economic holding, enough only to employ the peasant's own family and provide them with bare maintenance could be treated as personal property. He failed also to realize the growing need of the peasants to put up a world-wide struggle against world capitalism. Though he knew how 'the conditions of material existence determine the psychology and ideology of classes in groups' (p. 289), he did not attempt a study of the effect of the peasants' entry into world commerce on their psychology and ideology.

The following is a reconstruction of the Bukharin Table of contrast and comparison between the peasantry and proletariat (*Historical Materialism*, p. 289) in the light of our knowledge of modern peasantry. The presence or absence of the characteristics—both positive and negative—in these classes, is indicated by *plus* or *minus* signs respectively.

### Positive Qualities

	<i>Peasantry</i>	<i>Proletariat</i>
Economic exploitation ...	+	+
Political oppression ...	+	+
Poverty ...	+	+
Productivity ...	+	+
Personal Property ...	+	+
Freedom from private property ...	+	+
Freedom from private property in the case of small section ...	—	
Condition of union in exchanges and marketing ...	+	—
Condition of Union in production ...	—	+
Common labour ...	—	+

	<i>Peasantry</i>	<i>Proletariat</i>
Common family labour ...	+	—
Co-operation in accessory Occupational operations.	+	—
Display of initiative and organizational capacities.	+	—
Co-operative spirit in Citi- zenship ...	+	+
Class organization ...	+	+
Political and party organi- zation ...	+	+

**Negative Qualities**

	<i>Peasantry</i>	<i>Proletariat</i>
Sharing of other's fruits of labour ...	+ from agri- cultural labour	+ from total peasantry
Divided into unequal groups ...	+	+
Internal contradictions ...	+	+
Individualism ...	+ of the unconsci- ous section; also of the middle peasantry	+ of the skilled section

• Containing allies to the  
capitalist class

... + +

Just as the proletariat of most countries are a class in themselves but not yet a class for themselves, so also the peasantry are as yet a class in themselves, but not yet a class for themselves, for they both have to develop adequate class consciousness. While the proletariat are a distinct class by virtue of the position of the 'class in production', the peasantry are a distinct class by virtue

of their position not only in production but also in exchange operations. But like the proletariat the modern peasantry too take a long time after its formation as a class to realize the 'hostility of its interests to those of the other classes'. (*Historical Materialism*, p. 293)

### **The peasant is on the side of progress**

There is a wrong impression prevailing among orthodox Marxists that the peasant's 'production relations are so emphatic a break on the evolution of the productive forces that they simply must be broken up if society is to continue to develop'. (Bukharin's *Historical Materialism* p. 249)

This communist prejudice is due to the failure to appreciate the significance of Marx's remark in the Communist Manifesto that 'there is no need to abolish the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant'.

Certainly, the continuous sub-division and fragmentation of peasant holdings are a drag on the peasant's efforts. They can be remedied by consolidation by a suitable alteration of the laws of succession and inheritance and even by co-operative cultivation—all of which can be achieved through suitable legislation under a dynamic administration.

Peasant economy is in itself neither reactionary nor retrograde. It continues to play a progressive role in world affairs.

In the early stages there was communal ownership and exploitation of land in most parts of the world. Even today large numbers of Negroes and Red Indians know no system outside their collective agricultural economy. At some stage in the history of Asia and Europe, the exploitation of land by families came to be adopted. We can only try to conjecture the reasons for this major change. Could it have been the greater efficiency of family economy as distinguished from

communal economy? We cannot say for certain in the absence of data.

Later family economy came to be associated with the ownership of particular holdings.

Communal ownership still continued in respect of certain forests, fisheries, topes or gardens, grazing lands, threshing floors, etc. The land tax, too, was paid by the village panchayat, and families were responsible to it for the payment of their share.

These families were huge congregations of people—and came to be known as joint families; sometimes there were as many as 500 people in each.

Within each family, there subsisted a complete communist economy—from each according to his ability and inclination and to each according to his need. The Hindu joint family system came to allow individual male members to accumulate personal property out of their wives' dowries or out of any special earnings of their own. This opened the way for the gradual disintegration of the communist economy of the joint family. This joint family system prevailed in most countries of the East as well as in certain parts and communities of Africa.

The breakdown of the village economy of self-sufficiency, and of the panchayat system came under the impact of modern world markets and imperialism. The process of its breakdown set in 80 years ago; and it is still active. Only as recently as 1936, legislation was passed to facilitate its peaceful liquidation in Malabar. It is breaking up in Bengal and also in China.

The failure of this system is due to the fact that the small family, with its small holding has turned out to be a more productive agricultural organization of labour, and also a more economical agency for the utilization of the produce.

But with the advent of the world market, peasant economy has come to be linked up with the rest of the world. The crop economy based on self-sufficiency has been weakened. Banks supplement the activities of the village money-lender. Chemical manures and tested seed have been introduced and production for commerce and not primarily for food has become the rule.

Thus the peasant is linked up with the rest of the world. He has been dragged into the whirlpool of capitalism; he is in the vicious grip of the tentacles of imperialism. The peasant of today is as different from the 19th century peasant, as the present-day banker is from the ancient money-lender.

And what about the processes of cultivation? Can the peasant be persuaded to go in for co-operative farming? He can, if it is proved to pay better. If it can be demonstrated that co-operative farming is more paying and ensures a better standard of living, greater leisure and less arduous labour, the peasant would for certain vote wholeheartedly for it.

In this respect he is different from the capitalist or industrialist, who would not agree to a socialization of banking and industry, even if that should be demonstrated to be more beneficial to society.

A peasant therefore will not oppose progress, whereas an industrialist does. Peasant economy, as such, is not opposed to the adoption of advanced methods of organizing and utilizing peasant labour, if they can first of all be demonstrated to be more remunerative.

### **Role of the landless peasantry**

On an average, the landless peasants form a third of the total peasant class; a portion of them are share-croppers or tenants of others. They look upon the landed peasants as employers, since it is they who exploit them

directly, though primarily for the benefit of the non-agrarian peoples.

There is thus a latent conflict of interests between these two sections of peasants. Yet, they are not two distinct and opposite classes; they are but two groups within a single class against the landed peasant.

Most of the grievances of the landless peasant against landed peasant could be remedied in a remodelled economy, provided both make common cause and present a united front against the common exploiters—the capitalist class and their allies.

The problem of exploitation of the landless can be solved by prescribing minimum wages and also by prescribing the workers' share of the additional benefit that might be derived from higher prices secured through a common drive against capitalism.

But the problem of land is more ticklish. A partial solution lies in obliging all those who own more than a prescribed area of land to give away the surplus to the landless either on rent or at State-regulated prices. All the Government lands, home-farms and land occupied by the landlord should be handed over to the landless peasants for co-operative cultivation. Additional work in cottage industries and even large-scale manufacture will have to be found for them.

Nevertheless, there will still be a good number of landless peasants who have to be provided with social services that industrial labour cannot provide. Why not completely socialise the land? Peasants on the same footing, or not practicable. The claim of the landless is only an economic holding or even a right. It is just, as society has to assure the landless of this minimum source of livelihood. Moreover, the working peasant



position than a skilled worker drawing comparatively high wages.

The common ground between the landed peasant and the landless lies in fighting capitalism, achieving 'equal and fair exchange relations,' between agriculture and capitalism ; and attaining complete political power in alliance with other classes of toilers.

Let us consider Lenin's dictum that the peasants would gradually merge into the proletariat.

Even in Russia, this has not yet happened. It cannot happen in other countries. For the entire environment of the peasant is so radically different from that of the proletariat. Their respective conditions of life and the resultant class ideology perpetuate and aggravate the difference.

The greatest ambition of every landless peasant is to secure the right, howsoever inconsiderable, over land and its cultivation. So he is more interested in the development of a co-operative agricultural economy than in ranging himself against the peasant class as such and converting it into the proletariat.

Agricultural labour as a distinct entity, will continue as one of the groups among the great class of peasants, landed or landless. In the category of landed peasants are included both the land-owning peasant, the tenants, the member of any co-operative land colony of today and the member of any future land colonization co-operative of the future.

The landless peasant alone shares the disability of the industrial proletariat. But he is on the highway towards the achievement of a direct interest in land and its products, even while he co-operates with other sections of his class for their common emancipation from world capitalism.

## CHAPTER XXI

### EVIL RESULTS OF A WRONG IDEA

#### Russian Warning

In Russia, because of his fear that the peasants might prove counter-revolutionary, and because of his failure to understand the revolutionary significance of the peasants' 242 demands, Lenin assumed, from the very outset of his career, the leadership of the proletariat, to the exclusion of the peasantry.

The power captured in the name of both the peasantry and the proletariat was allowed to be monopolized by the latter. True to the Marxian doctrine, Government was turned into a proletariat dictatorship.

To sustain this dictatorship, the authorities discriminated against peasants, by giving the vote to one among every five of them, while every individual member of the proletariat exercised the franchise.

Under stress of war, the Counter-Revolution and the failure of the proletariat to produce the manufactured goods so badly needed by the peasants and under the anti-peasant influence of Trotsky and his military levies, Lenin had to adopt the policy of conscripting the peasants' produce.

Against this the peasants rebelled. If only the peasants had been fully represented in the Bolshevik Party and the Revolutionary State, greater consideration would have been shown to their legitimate demands and needs and the catastrophic famine of 1920-22 might have been averted or at least its horrors minimized.

Did the peasants non-co-operate? They did not—they substantiated the Revolution; they expropriated the landlords and divided up the lands; fought against the

Counter-Revolution and smashed it up; and maintained the Revolutionary State. But when the Bolshevik Party proved false to them, they rebelled.

The rebellion failed because they had neither a well-organized nation-wide party nor any leadership. Widespread hunger and deaths brought them into submission.

Lenin too learnt his lesson. He abandoned Trotsky's methods. The New Economic Policy was inaugurated. To the exasperated peasantry this proved a blessing.

But Stalin had to fight Trotsky, who demanded the total suppression of peasant resistance. So, he launched his campaign for the co-operatization of agriculture. His main instruments to achieve this end were :

(a) The Bolshevik Party's working up the passions and cupidity of the landless peasant.

(b) Splitting up the peasants and dubbing every convenient peasant a Kulak, to be imprisoned, exiled or executed and his property confiscated.

(c) Burdening the peasants with heavy discriminating taxation.

(d) Creating co-operative farms by force.

Again the peasants rebelled and indulged in destruction of farm property and live-stock, threatening to bring about famine. There were even attempts at a peasant revolution.

At last wisdom dawned on Stalin. 'Giddy with success' he assured the peasants that co-operatization would be purely voluntary.

This crisis too could have been averted, if the peasants had been taken into Government and their views heard with sympathy. A dictatorship cannot understand the needs and feelings of those sections of the masses whom it does not represent.

The concessions granted to the peasants in the 1937 constitution did not give them effective power, for though

they constituted 50 per cent of the population, they had hardly secured 35 per cent representation in parliament.

Russia's ill-treatment of the peasants is the biggest warning to the world against any sectional dictatorship of part of the toilers.

## CHAPTER XXII

### WHEN CAN PEASANTS BE REVOLUTIONARY?

Why talk about revolution ?

Because life progresses not evenly, but by leaps and bounds—in sudden spurts after periods of quiescence.

Do revolutions need to be violent ?

The English revolution of 1688 points that if the masses are determined enough on a change and their opponents despair of averting it, then the revolution can be achieved without bloodshed.

If, however, the ruling class is unafraid, confident of its powers of resistance and certain disruption in the ranks of the revolutionaries, then violence needs must ensue.

Gandhiji is aware of the danger of violence inherent in revolution. He prepares the capitalists' mind therefore through the conception of trusteeship to grasp the fact that the masses must ultimately gain control over the world's wealth and means of production.

Through Satyagraha he prepares the masses for the revolutionary struggle.

By admitting the need for violence for one who cannot offer the non-violence of the brave he leaves the door open for the practice of violence in self-defence by the revolutionary.

The Marxists argue that only violence can succeed. That is a dogmatic attitude. Let us make experiments with non-violence.

It has so far yielded good results in India. Violence led workers in Germany, France and the U.S.A. to many disasters and troubles.

When do people yearn for revolution ?

Hunger alone cannot arouse the people, (witness the Bengal famine); neither can mere exploitation howsoever ruthless (look at the Harijans).

But the urge towards revolution comes when they are moved by some elemental idea such as nationalism, revolutionary socialist ideology, or religion.

When made keenly conscious of their wrongs, when organized into a well-knit party, and provided with political leadership, when animated by a strong sentiment of nationalism and at the same time confronted by exceptional crises like economic depressions, famine, war, or acute unemployment, the peasantry is ripe for revolution.

Lenin's theories about the revolutionary movement and leadership were developed either on the eve of the 1917 November Revolution or soon afterwards. So there is no mathematical rule for predicting the advent of revolution or measuring its intensity. Revolutionaries have marched step by step in the general direction of their objective.

Even more than class interests the national spirit asserts itself powerfully. Its aid has to be invoked by those who would achieve social revolution.

The Indian Kisan and Mazdoor organizations have grown up only in the wake of nationalism. So, nationalism is a progressive revolutionary force without whose aid social revolutions cannot succeed.

How is our formula opposed to that of orthodox Marxists ?

1. They say that the proletariat alone are revolutionary. We claim that the peasants and the professional classes are equally revolutionary.

2. They argue that the peasants are counter-revolutionary. We contest that.

3. They want a proletariat dictatorship. We maintain it must be the Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj.

4. They claim that the exploitation of workers by capitalism is a world-wide phenomenon; we admit that, but add that exploitation of the peasantry by capitalism is even more widespread and more ruthless.

5. They point to the peasants' lands as making them allies of capitalism. We prove they are personal property, not private property, so that the peasants cannot and ought not be clubbed with the capitalists.

6. They say the proletariat cannot be bribed and corrupted. We say the proletariat can be partially appeased—not so the peasantry.

7. They argue the peasantry must be content with a proletarian dictatorship. We contest that and say that neither the peasantry nor the proletariat can be content with the dictatorship of the other.

8. True, the proletariat want power—that is legitimate. So do the peasants and just as legitimately. People want not food alone, but also self-governance and democracy.

9. Nationalism, the most revolutionary force among the modern colonial people is strong among peasants and villages. Hence the colonial peasantry form the greatest revolutionary force.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF MIDDLE CLASSES

The middle classes have been neglected by Marxists. For historical reasons, Marx looked upon them as *bourgeois*. In later times, he noticed the emergence of the *petite bourgeoisie*. But, he could not anticipate their rise to prominence in politics. Mr Cole's *What Marx Really Meant* describes the emergence of the middle classes as a great political power in the twentieth century. But the Marxists' prejudices against them persisted.

In the Russian Revolution, the Socialists were carried away by the momentum of their prejudices, and persecuted the middle classes, denying them franchise. The middle classes revolted against the Bolshevik persecution. They fled the country and denied the Government co-operation. The consequences were disastrous. Soviet industry and commerce suffered particularly for want of intellectuals and technicians. Large numbers of them had to be invited from abroad at great cost. Thus even Lenin had to recognize the need for these key men.

Stalin initiated the policy of training Russians to play this key role in industry. By 1935 local technicians were available. But, they too demanded higher salaries and State recognition as a class distinct from the proletariat. These demands had to be conceded.

Today in Russia, the middle classes are labelled technicians or professionals as separate from the peasantry and the proletariat. They are granted votes and encouraged to send their own members to parliament. If only this recognition had been offered in 1920, how much misery could have been averted!

Germany's middle classes took their warning from the fate of Russia. They learnt the lesson of the German



revolution of 1917-18. So, they reacted as a class in the pursuit of their objective—political power. They too favoured a dictatorship; they too achieved power by a revolution. They realized the power of ideology. They combined, therefore, nationalism of the masses with the Socialism of the toilers, Prussian militarism with the prevailing yearning for a dictatorship. The result was the Hitlerian dictatorship. What did this achieve? Not unlike Lenin's New Economic Policy, National Socialism achieved a controlled capitalism and the first stages of Socialism.

In this revolution the middle classes had the peasants for allies. The proletariat was neutral, so was a section of the employers.

Their methods were: Terrorism, control of both employers and the proletariat.

Their passions were: Jew-baiting; hatred of Russia, opposition to the Comintern, race arrogance and the cult of war. Notwithstanding all its horrors, German National Socialism demonstrated the revolutionary capacity of the middle classes. The pity is that it ran into counter-revolutionary channels and as it developed became a hideous menace to humanity.

*In England*: The general strike of 1926 failed because the middle classes sabotaged it.

In World War II, the British middle classes rallied to the nation's call and sacrificed their all. They forced Government to control profiteering and to introduce many quasi-socialist measures; thus the way was paved for the advent of a Labour Government.

*In China*: The first champions of the nationalist cause were the middle classes. They gave the first recruits to the National Army, the first to face the full fury of Japanese aggression. Today they are in the forefront of the revolutionary movement.

*In India*: Up to 1920, the middle classes provided the leadership of the Congress, not because the masses were not nationalistic but because the middle classes were the more conscious exponents of nationalism. The movements of 1920, 1930, 1932 and 1939-44 drew them in larger numbers into the orbit of the Indian revolution. They provided the vanguard up to 1939.

In the 1939-44 movement both the proletariat and the middle classes failed. The proletariat failed because of the defection of the Trade Unionists, the Communist Party and the Radical Democratic Party. The middle classes failed because the Congress Ministries did not inspire them with confidence in the future, and because the National Congress did not train them for leadership.

But if only the middle classes and the proletariat had co-operated with the peasantry what could not have been achieved?

The middle classes desire higher wages, higher personal incomes and freedom of expenditure. They desire equally passionately honour, social recognition and political power in their own right.

Today capitalism offers them salaries, etc. and even power; but they are discontented, for it is only a delegated power with honour and recognition on sufferance.

•In India and China the middle classes can be, and are, nationalistic, revolutionary, even socialistic. They are strongly and deeply intertwined with the masses—passionately attracted to the racial fabric of our society. They form the cream of the thinking section of the masses. They have the capacity and characteristics of leadership. They cannot be ignored. They can be kept out only at our peril. What have they to gain from the social revolution? Dignity, recognition, an honourable partnership in popular power. They have nothing

to lose. They desire opportunities to play a role befitting them in the political and economic life of the country.

Gandhiji has understood their role and rights. He welcomes their partnership; respects their passion for religion, tradition, culture, fine arts and invites their co-operation in the National Revolution.

Our National Revolutionary Front can be strengthened if we seek every opportunity to bring the patriotic and consciously revolutionary middle classes into its ranks.

Today Pakistanites, Hindu Mahasabhis and Communists are trying to permeate and fraternize with the Defence Forces in order to pervert them and make them either communal or anti-Indian. This danger must be averted. The ideology of the Indian National Congress is favourable to the middle classes. True it favours the capitalist class also to some extent. That, however, is only a transitional feature. It is partly due also to the undeniable need of revolutionary nationalist India for capitalist co-operation at this juncture.

The method of approach of the Congress has to be further revolutionized. The middle classes and the masses have to be more deliberately won over and encouraged. The latest instructions of Mahatma Gandhi are intended to accomplish this objective.

De Velera and Kemal Pasha have shown the way. There is a special need for all genuine Socialists and Congressmen to spread these ideas among the rank and file of the Nationalists. Our slogan must therefore be, 'Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja Raj'.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WHO ARE THE PROLETARIAT?

Marx thought only of those workers as the proletariat who had no control over the means of production and who had been dispossessed of the instruments of production.

This restricted application of the word 'Proletariat' leaves out the huge masses of handloom weavers and other artisans who do possess their tools of production and who yet suffer from the machinations of capitalism. In India the weavers alone number ten million, and the oil-mongers two million, contrasted with industrial labour numbering less than five million.

In the East, the true proletariat include both the artisans and factory workers. So the definition of this word has to be suitably amended in order to cover the artisans who own their tools of production and may work in their own houses.

So far as the East is concerned, it is more the control over exchanges, finance, capital, marketing, and the production and distribution of commodities that settles the social character and economic conditions of workers and employers than the mere question of the ownership of tools and factors of production. Those who are on the right side of these exchanges, finance, capital and markets, grow to be the upper classes and exploiters and those on the wrong side descend to the level of the lower classes—the exploited.

Indian experience, gained in organizing handloom weavers, shows how revolutionary and anti-capitalistic and nationalistic these artisans can be. With the help of co-operative credits and marketing, utilization of better machinery and scientific dyeing and designing, handloom

weaving can be helped to become both efficient and economical. So such artisans can be turned into as good revolutionaries as those employed in organized, mechanized industries and their revolution can play a progressive role.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE MENACE OF VIVISECTING INDIA

The slogan of Pakistan was started in 1940, nearly a year after the Congress had declared war against British Imperialism in the cause of Indian freedom.

Mr Jinnah was himself contemptuous of the idea until 1937, even while Dr Latif and the Khaksars were flirting with it.

It owes its political significance :

- (a) to Britain's anxiety to arrest the march of India towards national freedom ;

- (b) to British antipathy towards the Congress ;

- (c) to British machinations against India's slogan of complete independence.

Pakistan is being demanded, not in a spirit of friendliness, but with the intention of reviving the long-forgotten religious wars ; not with a view to regenerate and uplift the Muslim masses, but to excite and bolster up their religious antagonism to the Hindus. This becomes clear to any one who follows the Pakistan press and the Khaksars' ambitions.

Pakistan has now become the war cry of the Muslim League. What would happen if it is conceded ?

Mr Jinnah and Rajaji maintain that India could still be united in all other respects except

Does not Mr Jinnah demand :  
customs, economic policy and prog  
Pakistan aim at economic self-suf  
against Hindustan's imports ? If  
on the highroad to tariff and ec  
a constant state of armed neutral  
ties. That would result in the  
resources in men and materials,

and efforts for the economic and social uplift of the masses, to the suicidal development of wasteful and competitive defence forces, and economic warfare.

In a divided India there can be no scope for the development of class organizations, class consciousness or socialist propaganda. Once nationalism and religion are mixed up, the economic needs of the masses are relegated to the background. A militant theocracy and Socialism are even less reconcilable than Socialism and religion.

Once Pakistan is conceded, the Muslims are more than likely to think in terms of Pan-Islamism. That would introduce a new rivalry among Asiatic peoples. Both Russia in the north and the Anglo-Americans would take advantage of this volcanic internecine struggle. Hence the far-sighted British move to make India the pivot of their eastern empire.

The Muslims are even now indifferent to the fact that Indian patriots are held in jail, though they clamour for the release of Arab leaders jailed in Palestine! So poor is their loyalty to India and so great their passion for Pan-Islam.

In this, they are not unlike the Communists in this country. They too are more concerned with Russia and Soviet interests than with India and her problems.

Why do Mr Jinnah and Rajaji and the Communists compare their demand for self-determination to what is said to have been conceded in Russia? For all their talk, the Russians are a practical race. There are today, it is true, 16 different States in the U.S.S.R., every one free to secede, but do not exercise the right because they are held together by their common communist ideal, their joint socialist system. And as Stalin put it in 1937, there is no internal capitalism to disrupt their unity. Neither an inner State nor a border State can hope to remain independent for long even if it should secede.

The latest amendment of the constitution gives power to States to have their own Foreign Offices and Embassies and also to form independent units of the Red Army. Yet, they all continue to be members of the great Soviet Union.

Would Mr Jinnah and the Communists agree to a similar plan? Their Foreign Offices could not pursue any foreign policies contrary to those of the Union. Would our Indian supporters of Pakistan accept it? The armies of the Soviet States cannot be entirely independent of each other, nor can they fight against each other; they can only be units in the Red Army, which is subject to the orders of the Union. Would Indian separationists agree to this arrangement?

Moreover, there is the Communist Party to bind all Soviet States together; there are no disruptive elements such as capitalists and landlords.

But here, in India, are the Congress and the League, with their political antagonism, and rival religious fanatics who would not even stop at violence.

There is no guarantee that once Pakistan has been conceded, the peoples in the two States will be allowed to settle down to constructive work, for the religio-nationalists who today are in the saddle are bound to be in power for at least the first ten years, notwithstanding all the Communist arguments.

• And there would be Britain and Russia and China on the border—also the new Islamic States in the north-west. American capital would be in the background. Would not all this bode ill for the Indian masses? What is Mr Jinnah's Karachi slogan?—that the British shall divide India and quit. They might divide India into Pakistan and Hindustan, but would they quit as soon as they had done that? The whole history of British Imperialism cries aloud against such hope. The British would not quit, indeed, they are more than likely to continue to control



either the united or differentiated defence forces; to encourage the two States to wage economic war against each other and thus prevent any progress towards economic or political or even cultural unity.

The Congress offer of August 1942, with necessary modifications, on the lines of the latest Soviet amendments seems to be the best in the circumstances.

Will the League agree to this? Not as long as there is hope of the British suppressing Indian Nationalism and the Indian National Congress. Rajaji and the Communists urge Congress acceptance of the Muslim League ultimatum. Rajaji has no faith in the future of Indian revolutionary nationalism; he wishes, therefore, to yield. That is the counsel of the counter-revolution.

The Communists' plea is based on their hope for the eventual emergence of some 'Red Provinces' as full-fledged States under the operation of the principle of self-determination, once that has been conceded. And there is the Chinese precedent for it.

They do not believe also that India can be or can grow into one great, united and composite nation.

Their leader, Stalin himself, sounded a warning more than a decade ago against accepting India 'as a homogeneous whole'. But while he was then thinking of linguistic and cultural provinces, the Indian Communist Party today is prepared to divide India on the basis of ideological and religious differences.

By the historical conspiracy of events, the Communist slogan has come to be associated with the League's demand for Pakistan.

### **Communist party's intrigues for 'Red Areas' in India**

How could the Indian Communist Party ever dream of achieving a proletariat revolution in a predominantly

agrarian country and then ask for the application of the principle of self-determination for the recognition of the independence of the 'Red' areas of India? The Communists imagine that the whole world (particularly the colonial part of it) is an extension of their Fatherland, Soviet Russia, and that the victorious Soviet proletariat can furnish the proletarian revolutionary leadership, the Red Army, the common revolutionary weapon and the Comintern, the revolutionary vanguard. Though there might not be any powerful proletariat locally it would not matter, because the Soviet proletariat would serve the purpose. Even if the local Communist Party has no local roots, it would matter little.

When the proper time comes, the Soviet proletariat, the Red Army, and the Communists in Russia and elsewhere will fight and destroy world capitalism and its weapons. The capitalist States will fall into the hands of the Communists of the respective countries.

That this is the game of even the Indian Communist Party was evident from a Communist's question to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the Poona session of the A.I.C.C. in 1940, whether he would not welcome the march of the Red Army into India.

Lenin exhorted the Comintern to carry on 'systematic propaganda' in the colonies 'while the Soviet Governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal' and to organize 'peasant Soviets' and to strive to adopt them to pre-capitalist conditions.

And what better method could be there for the exercise of these tactics than to get a Pakistan carved out that would be economically weak, politically undeveloped and religiously fanatical—and then try their familiar experiments of fraternization, permeation, disruption, and eventually capture it altogether, particularly when Soviet Russia is only a few hundred miles away and the

Red Army's aerial battalions could stretch their welcome wings over this part of India in a couple of hours.

Hence the far-sighted campaign of the Indian Communists to stimulate enthusiasm and loyalty to the Red Army by celebrating a 'Red Army Day' in India, and shouting slogans in praise of it. Hence, too, the Communists' oft-repeated assertion that they do not contemplate any permanent division of India; for as Stalin has put it, there will be a 'joining of the different nationalities in a proletarian culture', once the Communist Party is able to achieve complete dictatorship over the whole of India, of course, in the name of the proletariat. And this proletariat need not necessarily be that of India. For, has not Marx declared that the proletariat has no fatherland and exhorted the workers of the world to unite?

Such is the ideological background of the otherwise unintelligible and what appears to be the thoroughly unpatriotic support lent by the Indian Communist Party to the League's Pakistan slogan.

If India desires to achieve Swaraj and begins her march towards social and political progress, if Indian Socialists wish to ensure healthy conditions for the masses to organize themselves and advance towards socialization, if Indian nationalists do not wish to see the Indian masses pursue suicidal economic, political and religious policies, then India shall not be allowed to be vivisected.

Yet, the statesman that he is, Mahatma Gandhi has agreed to negotiate on the basis of Rajaji's new proposals. Mr Jinnah has refused even to discuss them. What are the cardinal points in these proposals? That the Muslim-majority districts—provided they are contiguous—be allowed to form themselves into separate political units, enjoying autonomy, subject to certain restrictions on their sovereignty; that such States or political units shall form a Federation known as Pakistan.

But before this happens, let there be a provisional agreement among all political parties as to the manner and degree of co-operation there is to be between the proposed Pakistan and Hindustan on such subjects of common brotherly interest as foreign affairs, defence and commerce.

Mr Jinnah sees in this a trap to prevent his Pakistan from becoming a fully sovereign State. He wants his Pakistan to come into existence as a sovereign body and then to negotiate, if it so wishes, with Hindustan on the terms of co-operation. Gandhiji says: 'Let us part as brothers.' Mr Jinnah says that only political considerations shall be allowed to influence the negotiations for mutual co-operation. Gandhiji bases his stand on the latest and most progressive trends in political science and practice in respect of the sovereignty of States, and desires to see India become a member of the World State with its world defence force. He suggests, therefore, that neither Hindustan nor Pakistan shall be a sovereign State in the old sense, but that they shall become part of a confederated and co-operative union for specified purposes, so that the masses of India may be assured of co-operating, not competitive, brotherly, not inimical States.

Mr Jinnah is orthodox and doctrinaire; he wants his Pakistan to be modelled on the old-time concept of the State with all-embracing sovereignty. He does not realize that this way lies disaster for India and for the world.

Then who shall decide whether there shall be Pakistan at all? Mr Jinnah insists on the League's competence to decide the issue. Gandhiji on the other hand, maintains that it must be for the entire adult population of the proposed Pakistan area to decide.

The Communist Party agrees with Mr Jinnah and thus seeks to deny the right of the masses to decide

whether they shall go into Pakistan, as distinguished from the all-India State. Its stand comes to this: once a political demand of such far-reaching consequences as the complete political separation of a part of India from the rest is made by a powerful organization, it must be conceded without reference to the democratic vote of the masses.

Could there be anything more undemocratic than this? But it is in conformity with the undemocratic practice of this party. Moreover this attitude is symptomatic of its political ambitions, for would it not be able to extend the same principle, once it has been conceded, when later it expects to make the same undemocratic demand for the separation of any area as Red India? Indeed, is not the Chinese Communist Party adopting this very policy when it imposes the condition unilaterally that in all areas liberated from the Japanese by partisan troops, the administration shall consist of equal numbers of representatives of its own, of the Kuomintang and of the non-party classes, with no reference at all to the masses?

Even Mr Jinnah is able to see the justice of Gandhiji's demand for a reference to the masses. So he has agreed to refer the question of Pakistan at least to the Muslim masses of the areas concerned. He has thus shown himself more democratic than the Communist Party.

But Mr Jinnah's concession is not enough. What is to happen to all the minorities in those areas, asks Rajaji. And he is right. How can any minority—especially when it happens to be distinguished from the majority by differences of religion, culture and political ideology—features which today are raised to the status of political issues by both the League and the Communist Party—be ordered to change its political allegiance and give up its cherished ideal of Indian unity, without being consulted about it, without being given the opportunity of taking part in the

plebiscite? This plea of Rajaji and of all democrats and lovers of freedom makes no appeal to the League and Communist circles.

If the worst and most unfriendly criticism of the League were accepted, what might be the implication of Rajaji's proposals, as interpreted by Gandhiji? That India be reconstituted into two or more sub-federations and be provided with an all-embracing confederation with certain specified functions in respect of certain all-India interests.

- Is there anything undemocratic about that? Could it not be possible for the sub-federations to enjoy effective political and economic freedom such as in actual practice the Balkan and Latin American States enjoy under the hegemony of the Great Powers? Could not the All-India Confederation assure them greater power and freedom than what is actually enjoyed either by those countries or even by the so-called free Confederate States of Soviet Russia? Why go so far? Did not Mr Jinnah suggest in his interview to the *News Chronicle* that the British Government might divide India and then retain for itself over-all powers in the matter of defence, commerce and foreign affairs? Could such a dispensation be half as nationalistic as that implicit in Gandhiji's proposals? Would it not place British Imperialism in the saddle for ever? Would not Pakistan under such auspices be less free and powerful than it could be under Gandhiji's proposals?

Yet, the Communist Party wants the Congress to yield to these impossible, undemocratic, and unpatriotic demands.

Let Indians be given iron-clad guarantees that there cannot be and will not be any rivalry in armaments and tariffs and any warlike preparations between Pakistan and Hindustan, whether it be by the World State or by

a confederate, co-operative Union, then, we are sure, Gandhiji and the National Congress would be the first to agree to Pakistan.

Is Mr Jinnah ready for this? Is the Communist Party willing to back up such a proposal?

But Mr Jinnah raised the bogey of a Hindu majority outvoting the Muslim minority in any future confederate, co-operative Union. He is wrong. For, in such a Union, the excellent principle of equality of the co-operating States would be recognized irrespective of their populations and commercial, agricultural or industrial importance.

As equals, with equal voting power, trying to decide everything unanimously and, when not able to come to agreed decisions, referring their differences to an international court, let Pakistan and Hindustan go into a brotherly confederation! This is the offer made by patriotic Indians who are also Socialists.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### CONCLUSION

India and Indians are on the crest of a great revolutionary wave, with a dynamic ideology and a really progressive mission on behalf of the exploited and coloured peoples and races of the world.

Mrs Gunther's slogan, 'India in Revolution,' is quite apt.

• What are the aims of the Indian revolution ?

1. To reconcile nationalism and Socialism, as Russia and Germany have done ; but to prevent the combination from ending in neo-imperialism as in Russia, or in chauvinism as in Germany.

Gandhiji seeks to buttress nationalism and Socialism by democracy and Ahimsa. This is definitely a progressive lead in a world where Britain and the U.S.A., who professed to fight for democracy, are, in practice, denying it to subject peoples.

2. To recognize honestly the primacy of nationalism ; yet to make it inseparable from internationalism is India's present mission. To practice the ideals of nationalism in such a way as inescapably to achieve, in practice, international virtues and responsibilities is the special contribution of Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru.

• For instance, while Britain and America were selling war materials to Japan, India openly championed China's cause and boycotted Japanese goods.

• While Russia was rendering only faltering help to Spain and knuckling down to the pro-Fascist, anti-intervention machinations of Britain and France, India was despatching a shipload of food for Spanish Republicans. While England, France and Russia were hesitating to



enforce sanctions against Italy to save Abyssinia, India was loud in its demand for effective sanctions.

Russia accepted without much demur the policy of the League of Nations recognizing the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. She also accepted the Japanese conquest of Manchuria. India on the contrary stands by Tagore's condemnation of Chauvinistic nationalism and his inspiring song about International Brotherhood in the *Gitanjali*.

Gandhiji and Nehru are in the best and most practical manner citizens of the world. They desire, foremost, to free India. But that is to be the stepping stone for the achievement of freedom for other subject countries and their peoples. They aim as opportunity offers itself, at throwing India's resources into the struggle for the achievement of a World State.

*This is a more honest, consistent, practical and statesman-like lead than that offered by the practice of Soviet Russia.*

3. To recognize the character and causes of modern wars, and to try to teach humanity '*to be good and do good*' (as for example the Buddha taught) is the essence of Congress policy. Gandhiji does not agree that wars are brought about by economic causes alone. Orthodox Communists think that once the problem of the employers' exploitation of the proletariat has been resolved and a proletarian revolution and dictatorship have been established, wars would automatically be eliminated. But even for the elimination of the *economic* causes of war, it is equally necessary to end the exploitation of the peasants by the industrialists and of the colonies by imperialist nations.

In addition, Gandhiji insists on the transformation of popular behaviour; he emphasizes the need for disciplining and controlling the mass mind in order to check war-mindedness and win over peoples to the ways of peace.

If to aim at such scientific regulation of social life and to seek the solution of the problem of war is to be spiritual, then Gandhiji is the spiritual man *par excellence*. In that sense the world has everything to gain from the Gandhian approach to world problems.

Even as the message of the Buddha came to influence a war-weary world, and led people towards compassion, tolerance and humanity, so, today will Gandhiji's message of world brotherhood and love help mankind triumph over its ephemeral trials.

• 4. Marx first brought the existence of class war prominently to the notice of the world. Gandhiji too recognizes its existence. Both wish to eliminate it and achieve a classless society, through revolution. But while Marx contemplated a violent revolution, Gandhiji would achieve it through non-violence. In most parts of the world, violence has failed. Violent revolutions have not succeeded, nor have they proved stable.

Non-violence is certainly fruitful of great results. It is within the capacity of the colonial peoples. It has transferred Indians from a listless, defeatist people into a powerful and revolutionary nation.

India is now engaged in the creative human experiment of accomplishing a non-violent revolution. To oppose and obstruct the experiment is counter-revolutionary.

• 5. Marx laid down that a proletarian revolution could eliminate capitalism and set up a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Gandhiji, Nehru and their associates take a broader view of the historical forces and realize that it is not only the proletariat, but also the peasants, professional workers and intellectuals, who have to play a *revolutionary role* and achieve a full-fledged revolution—not a dictatorship, but the democratic hegemony of the peasants, proletariat and praja.

6. Gandhiji has recognized the latent revolutionary capacity of the peasants. Marx failed to do so.

Gandhiji has set himself the task of preparing the peasants for social revolution, and has encouraged many of us to go ahead with the task of organizing them, developing their own particular ideology and fashioning out of them a revolutionary instrument.

India is fully pointing the way for the world in recognizing, training and organizing the peasantry.

7. Gandhiji and the Indian Peasants' Institute have demonstrated that the Soviet theory about exploitation is wrong, that the biggest of all problems is that of the exploitation of the world peasantry by capitalism.

Orthodox Marxists are obsessed with the proletariat. Indian nationalists have developed the more comprehensive, more fully historical conception of the three revolutionary classes of toilers—the *peasants*, the *proletariat*, and the *praja*.

8. India and other colonial countries are in a transitional period. They have yet to achieve national freedom. They have, next, to safeguard themselves against falling back into the clutches of capitalism. For this, once freedom has been won they have to prepare themselves for the march towards Socialism.

So, in India, is being enacted the most interesting social and revolutionary ideological development, fraught with the most momentous possibilities. Gandhiji is progressing from nationalism towards Socialism. The Socialists are marching from Socialism towards nationalism. In the language of Leninist dialectics, this may result in a happy and progressive synthesis of these two great forces.

To regulate their flow through the golden channels of discipline, Gandhiji's conceptions of democracy and

non-violence are being given practical shape in India's struggle for freedom.

9. India today is at the crossroads as in 1920. Gandhian politics were then grafted on to the practical politics of Gokhale, the aggressive nationalism of Tilak and the Vedantic militancy of Vivekananda.

Today, Pandit Jawaharlal's Socialism and the revolutionary technique and historic missions of the peasantry and the proletariat are being grafted on to a fully-developed Gandhism.

Just as the earlier fusion of political and spiritual forces led India to the golden age of revolution (1920-40) so also, the *present confluence* of historic forces may be expected to lead India to a higher stage of revolutionary achievements.

In 1920, Anglophiles like Surendranath Bannerjee, Annie Besant, Bepin Chandra Pal, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri had to be left behind in the forward surge of revolutionary nationalism—they could not keep step with the spirit of the new age.

In like manner, today, Russophiles (that is, the Communists) and others like them have to be thrown out of the ranks of the revolutionary Gandhian front. For, they are out of sympathy with the spirit of the new age today, and are sadly lacking in the revolutionary urge of the Indian masses.

*There is one great difference.* Then, the Liberals, like the Communist Party and the Radical Democratic Party today, succumbed to the lure of Government positions or funds. Both have been guilty of treachery to the national cause. But, while the Liberals had only England to serve, the Communists owe allegiance and fealty both to England and Russia.

The Indian Liberals never could reach down to the masses. But the Communists aim at reaching them through some semblance of a scientific ideology.

Gandhiji and the nationalists outstripped the Liberals through revolutionary action and constructive work. Today, the Congress, with Gandhiji and Nehru at its head, and with the Kisans and Mazdoors with their class organizations in its ranks, is able to confront the Communist Party with the most revolutionary and the most comprehensive of programmes. It is confident of achieving success. Moreover the struggle of 1942-45 has exposed the inadequacy of Communist ideology, the slippery character of its programme and of its professions of patriotism. It has also forged a synthesis between Gandhi-Nehru socialist ideology and the revolutionary technique through the glowing fires of patriotic martyrdom and the revolutionary upsurge of the masses.













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